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THE

GOVERNMENT OF M. THIERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ELECTIONS.

This narrative opens on the 28th of January, 1871, a date of solemn import, that of the capitulation of Paris. On the 27th at midnight the firing had ceased, in virtue of a verbal agreement, which was to be ratified on both sides on the following day. Early on the morning of the 28th, M. Jules Favre went to Versailles, but Count Moltke, who was not satisfied with the stipulations that had been agreed upon, showed but little readiness to bring matters to a conclusion; at every moment some fresh difficulty was raised by the Staff, and the armistice was not signed until ten o'clock at night. It was one o'clock a.m. of the 29th when M. Jules Favre rejoined his colleagues. The railway managers

had been summoned, for the first thing to be arranged was the supply of food to Paris. The Council, having accomplished this task, would not separate until all matters connected with the convocation of the Assembly had been agreed to. Time and authority for the drawing up of an electoral law were alike wanting. It was resolved to put in action, with certain indispensable modifications, the last electoral law of the Republic, that of the 15th March, 1849, which may be summarized as follows:—Scrutiny of lists, cantonal voting, the electorate at twenty-one years of age, eligibility at twenty-five, no exclusion from either electorate or eligibility, except in the case of individuals under the sentence of the law.

At a time when so many citizens had accepted public functions from patriotic motives, it was considered expedient to suppress the greater number of cases of ineligibility that had been defined in 1849, and therefore the application of Articles 81 to 90 was suspended. The prohibition of the election of prefects and sub-prefects in the department in which they exercised their functions was confirmed. The army was called upon to vote, as in 1849, a measure rendered more than ever necessary by the fact that every Frenchman fit to carry arms was now enrolled. The number of deputies was fixed at 753 for conti-

nental France, 6 for Algeria, and 9 for the colonies: 768 in all.

The decree of the Council was signed at early dawn, immediately inserted in the *Journal Officiel*, and placarded in Paris a few hours later. Orders were issued for its immediate dissemination in the departments, but it was evident that this must for some days be impossible, or at least very difficult. The election was fixed for the 8th February, and the meeting of the Assembly at Bordeaux for the 12th. When M. Jules Favre announced these decisions to Count Bismarck, the first words uttered by the Chancellor were, "It is impossible."

It was indeed impossible; but nevertheless it was done.

More than a third of the territory of France was invaded by the enemy, and the administration of the occupied departments was carried on by German prefects. It was necessary to entrust the prefectorial functions to the mayor of each township,[1] and to proceed with the elections by sufferance of the conquerors. The uninvaded departments were in relations with M. Gambetta only, and notwithstanding the raising of the siege, communication between Paris and Bordeaux

[1] This is the nearest English equivalent for the French "chef-lieu."

was slow, difficult, and sometimes dangerous. The telegraphic despatches necessarily passed through Versailles, and were under the control of the Prussians. M. Gambetta having telegraphed to M. Jules Favre on the 30th January, was replied to by Count Bismarck, and was informed in the answer that the message of M. Gambetta should be communicated to the person for whom it was destined "as a matter of information." The railroads were in a deplorable condition, the rails torn up, the permanent ways encumbered, the bridges broken, the rolling stock dispersed or destroyed. Only from the 31st was it possible to travel from Paris to Bordeaux by railway, and then the line was broken at Orleans for a distance of six kilometers. The train leaving Paris on the 31st January at five o'clock in the morning, did not reach Bordeaux until one o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st February. Four hundred thousand French soldiers, and consequently four hundred thousand electors, were either prisoners in Germany, or refugees in Switzerland. Six months of warfare had disorganized the municipal service; the lists had not been revised, in many places they had disappeared; the functionaries were no longer at their posts. Such were the conditions under which the work of several months in ordinary

times had to be done within one week; and, the elections over, four days only would remain for the transaction of the subsequent business, consisting of verification of votes, declaration of results, and despatch of papers to Bordeaux. The new deputies would have to set out instantly on being informed of their election in order to arrive in time. It was easy to foresee that many would find no direct road open to them, and be obliged to make roundabout journeys, while others would hear simultaneously, in German prisons, of their candidateship and their election. The outlook on all sides was full of difficulties and hindrances, and finally, as if to turn the strained situation into an impossible one, a conflict arose between the Government in Paris and the Delegates at Bordeaux.

In his correspondence with M. Jules Favre during the siege, M. Gambetta had frequently declared his opinion that all the ministers, senators, councillors of state, prefects, and former official candidates of the Empire, should be excluded from the future National Assembly. Prior to his departure from Paris, he had argued in this sense in the Government councils; he had not prevailed, and M. Gambetta had signed, together with his colleagues, the decree of the 8th September, 1870, of which the new decree was only a formal reproduction. During that

long day which M. Jules Favre passed at Versailles, awaiting the ratification of the treaty, he had to consider whether the leader of the Delegates would again give in his adhesion to the decision of his colleagues, and undertake the execution of a decree of whose principle he disapproved.

In this uncertainty, and in order to avoid strife, M. Jules Favre resolved on sending a member of the Government armed with full powers to Bordeaux, and before consulting his colleagues, he announced this resolution, in general terms, by a despatch which Count Bismarck undertook to transmit, and which was received at Bordeaux on the 29th. The Council selected M. Jules Simon, the former deputy from the Gironde, and member of the General Council of the city of Bordeaux, before the Revolution of the 4th September. His nomination was confirmed, and his instructions were signed during the night of the 30th January. He left Paris on the following morning for Bordeaux.

The Government of Paris regarded it as extremely important that the clause of the decree by which the eligibility of all citizens without distinction was recognized, should be carried into effect; and it was no less important that a conflict with the Delegates should be avoided. M.

Jules Simon took with him two decrees; the first was as follows:—"The Government of the National Defence directs M. Jules Simon to proceed to Bordeaux, there to join the Delegates in the exercise of authority in concert with his colleagues, and to carry into execution the decrees of the Government of National Defence. The deliberations of the Delegates shall be taken by the majority of votes, no member having a casting vote. Paris, 30th January, 1871." The latter stipulation was hardly necessary, inasmuch as the number of the Delegates was raised to five by the addition of M. Jules Simon; and served no purpose except that of seriously altering the position of M. Gambetta, who had hitherto had a casting vote. The second decree reproduced the terms of the first, with the following addition:—"In the unforeseen case of resistance by the Delegates to the decrees and the orders of the Government of National Defence, M. Jules Simon is hereby invested with absolutely full power to carry them into effect." The second decree was not to be communicated to the Delegates until all hope of conciliation should have been abandoned.

When M. Jules Simon arrived at Bordeaux, anger and consternation reigned in the city. The missive addressed to M. Gambetta on the 28th,

had been sent from Versailles at 11.15 in the evening. M. Jules Favre announced the surrender of Paris, the conclusion of an armistice of twenty-one days, the summoning of an Assembly for the 12th February, and the despatch to Bordeaux of a member of the Government; but nothing more.

At three o'clock in the morning of the 29th this message arrived at its destination. The whole of the 29th passed away in the vain expectation of further news. On the 30th, M. Gambetta telegraphed to M. Jules Favre, complaining of the strange silence. Count Bismarck received the telegram; did not transmit it to the Government in Paris until the following day, the 31st, but himself replied at noon to M. Gambetta, informing him that hostilities were continuing "pending agreement" before Belfort, in the Doubs, in Jura, and in Côte d'Or.

Although it had long been known that no aid could reach Paris, and that its supplies of food were exhausted, the fall of the capital city produced the effect of an unexpected calamity. Instead of surrender, there ought to have been a sortie *en masse*, the "torrential" sortie afterwards demanded so often by the leaders of the Commune. Nothing but corpses and a desert should have been left for the enemy; but all France

would not have been in pawn. However great the importance of Paris, after all it was only one stronghold which surrendered. Why was the capitulation signed by M. Jules Favre in the name of the Government, and not by the military Governor in the name of the fortress? Why did the capitulation include an armistice for all France (with the fatal exception of the east), and an undertaking, given to the enemy, to summon an Assembly? This capitulation was not only a stipulation made for Paris; it was in reality a preliminary of peace. And what would that peace be, whither would it lead us, if the elections should introduce into the National Assembly accomplices of the Empire, who, having had power in their hands for eighteen years, and having been dispossessed of it for barely six months, still preserved a portion of their former influence, especially over the rural populations? Was there not reason to fear that they would consent to the completion of the ruin of which they were the authors, and that they would endeavour to restore the imperial dynasty?

These thoughts were working in the mind of M. Gambetta during the whole of the 30th January. Was this to be the conclusion of all the efforts made by himself and his fellow-labourers during the past six months, to defend the territory

and found the Republic! After twenty-four hours of suspense—without reflecting that M. Jules Favre had written to him on the 28th at the last moment, and before he could have consulted with his colleagues, that on the 29th and 30th the convention had to be concluded, the last obstacles to be surmounted, an electoral law to be drawn up, an envoy to Bordeaux to be selected, his instructions to be discussed, and the railroad to be restored to working order—M. Gambetta induced the Delegates to adopt an electoral law which affirmed the ineligibility of the functionaries of the Empire, and issued a proclamation in which the Government of Paris was accused of "culpable levity."

This proclamation drew forth a few days later from the Government of Paris an equally angry reply; it was only a reprisal indeed, but it widened the breach between the two Governments.

Then came a difficult moment; that of the first tussle between the Government of Paris and the Delegates of Bordeaux. It was inevitable. The armistice found M. Gambetta in the full tide of his exertions, and surrounded by an army of fighting-men; and it disarmed him just when he believed himself to be in a condition to fight, and even to conquer. It may be said without

exaggeration that he had performed wonders. He had created armies and generals, won battles, repaired defeats, provided for the most urgent necessities of order, rallied the timid, and inflated the courage of others, resisted the intrigues and the malevolence of parties, effected bargains, raised loans, filled the arsenals, and found time during all these labours to write letters—some of them admirable,—and to deliver harangues which aroused enthusiasm in their hearers. He did not refuse to summon an Assembly, on the contrary, he had long since called for the convocation of such a body, but he imposed as a condition, which he would not relinquish, the exclusion of all imperialists. He would not place power in the hands of men except such as were, like himself, resolved to prosecute the war, and to found the Republic.

For two days he expected from Paris explanations which did not come; but then, as the time fixed for the elections was approaching, he issued three decrees, all bearing date the 31st January. The first contained the convocation of the Assembly, the second the exclusion pronounced against all servants of the Empire; the third, which was to answer the purposes of an electoral law, put in action, with necessary modifications, the law of the 15th March, 1849. It is important

to observe that at the very hour at which the Delegates published these three decrees, the Government of National Defence on its part was making other dispositions, but the decree promulgated in Paris on the 28th, and inserted in the *Bulletin des Lois* on the 29th, was not known at Bordeaux. By acting thus hastily M. Gambetta simply meant to be beforehand with his colleagues in Paris, he had no deliberate intention of entering upon a conflict with them.

The decree of exclusion, signed by Crémieux, Gambetta, Glais Bizoin, and Admiral Fourichon, was posted on all the walls when M. Jules Simon arrived at Bordeaux. It ran as follows:—

"The members of the National Defence, delegated to represent the Government, and to exercise its powers;

"Considering it just that the accomplices of the reign that commenced with the deed of the 2nd December, and has ended in the capitulation of Sedan, bequeathing to France ruin and invasion, should be included in the same political deposition which has been pronounced against the accursed dynasty whose guilty instruments they have been;

"Considering that this step is a necessary consequence of the responsibility they have incurred by willingly and knowingly aiding and

abetting the ex-Emperor in the fulfilment of those divers acts of his Government, whereby the country has been placed in danger:

"DECREE,—

"Art. 1. Those individuals who, between the 2nd December, 1851, and the 4th September, 1870, have accepted the functions of minister, senator, councillor of state, and prefect, cannot be elected representatives of the people in the National Assembly.

"Art. 2. Those individuals who, at the legislative elections which have taken place between the 2nd December, 1851, and the 4th September, 1870, have accepted official candidateship, whose names are to be found on the lists recommended by the prefects to the votes of the electors, and have been published in the *Moniteur Officiel*, as Government candidates of the Administration, or Official candidates, are equally excluded from eligibility to the National Assembly.

"Art. 3. Returns of votes bearing the names of individuals comprised in the above categories are absolutely null and void. These returns will not be included in the computation of votes."

M. Jules Simon, on his way from the railway-station to the prefecture, with M. Lavertujon,

alighted from the carriage and read this decree. Without losing a moment the Delegates met. The situation was very easy to understand. What did M. Jules Simon represent there, in the midst of his colleagues, who were divided between anger and despair? He represented the capitulation. Of what was he the bearer? Of the order to retreat, to disown themselves; the order for M. Gambetta to renounce a long-cherished idea, concerning which he had written to M. Jules Favre, "If you adopt it, I will proceed with the elections; if you reject it, I will not do so."

On his entrance into the apartment where his colleagues awaited him, M. Jules Simon was assailed by bitter reproaches on the score of the capitulation, the armistice, and the situation in which the Army of the East was placed. M. Glais Bizoin has acknowledged this violence of language in his pamphlet entitled, *Cinq Mois de Dictature*. "M. Jules Simon allowed himself," says the author, "to be reviled." M. Jules Simon afterwards boasted in the tribune that he had done so, for he was in nowise ashamed of the fact. Charged as he was with great interests, he had no right to think of himself.

To the reproaches directed against the capitulation, he might have replied that no one had striven harder than he to prevent or to resist it;

that in his capacity as president of the Commission of Supplies, he had delayed until the stronghold had victuals for only eight more days before he gave warning to the Government; that he had insisted on the last council of war, and when the generals had renounced the attempt at a last sortie, a "sortie of despair," that he had taken it upon himself to assemble the colonels and ascertain their opinion; that Paris had surrendered, after five months of heroic resistance to cold, epidemic disease, bombardment, and famine. He might have pleaded that the Government thus severely condemned was guilty only of having failed to execute an impossible task, that of raising the blockade of a place besieged by a great army, without external aid; that neither he nor those who now attacked him had ever believed that Paris could save itself by its own strength only; that this Government now accused of supineness and incapacity had completed the ramparts, cast cannon, armed and drilled 300,000 men, prevented civil war, checked riot, made supplies last for five months which every one had believed to be insufficient for more than a few weeks; that the army of rescue so often announced in despatches that were now menacing, anon encouraging, had never made its appearance. Also, that if the governor were guilty, as his accusers declared, of not having

made sorties and fought battles often enough, the other generals who had twice held councils of war, on the 31st December and the 16th January, were as guilty as he, since none of them had proposed or procured the acceptance of a new plan; that after the battle of Buzenval not the generals only but the colonels also had declared it impossible for Paris to raise the blockade by her own strength, and that a sortie, whether partial or general, could have no other result than a butchery, without advantage to the defence. He might have pleaded that at the moment of the capitulation there remained only food enough—and such food!—for one week; that Paris was threatened with death by famine should the state of the railroads retard the revictualling of the city, as there was reason to fear; that the enemy was aware of the situation, and at the commencement of the negotiations had proposed the recall of Napoleon III., the convocation of the former legislative body, the military occupation of Paris, when the National Guard should be disarmed, the regiments deprived of their colours, and the officers of their swords, and the garrison carried as prisoners into Germany. Only after a long and desperate struggle, and reiterated threats of complete rupture, had less odious terms been obtained. M. Jules Simon might have added that the armistice

did not apply to the armies of the provinces until three days after it was signed; that on the 30th January the army of the east had crossed the Swiss frontier; and that if an omission had been made in the despatch of the 28th it was indeed to be regretted, but had no influence upon the fate of our army. Instead, however, of entering upon a discussion which would have been designedly prolonged, and might have been interminable, M. Jules Simon refused to make any reply until the electoral question had been settled.

He had no trouble in proving its urgency, for two contradictory decrees were actually then promulgated. He warned his colleagues at Bordeaux that the Government of Paris neither could nor would yield on the point of ineligibility. He appealed to the supreme authority of universal suffrage, before which an established Government is obliged to bow, and, with much more reason, one newly organized in an emergency. Universal suffrage is the expression of the national will: in the name of what principle, in the name of what interests would the delegates presume to prescribe laws, or mark out limits for it? Would the Assembly produced by the Bordeaux decree be a National Assembly? No, it would be a party Assembly. Under such conditions would its authority be submitted to by France or recognized abroad?

After having so frequently reproached the Empire with official candidateship, were we to adopt that system more boldly and on a larger scale? When we might found the Republic upon the desire of the country, should we base it upon a decree of Messieurs Gambetta, Crémieux, Glais Bizoin, and Fourichon? Even taking into account the narrowest political interest only, could it be believed that five months after Sedan the electors would vote for the accomplices of the Empire? Was a handful of Bonapartists, reduced to the status of a trumpery minority on the benches of the Chamber, more to be dreaded than an entire party outlawed by the nation, and who would have the right to call our own principles, those principles upon which the public peace rests, to witness against us? The Bonapartist deputies, it was said, would lead the Chamber into the acceptance of a disgraceful peace. Was not talk of this kind the supposition of a Bonapartist majority, that is to say, of the impossible? Was it not even a calumny against the Bonapartists, to whom as our enemies justice was due? Six hundred Frenchmen, whatever their opinions might be, chosen by their fellow-citizens, would make peace if it must be so, or would continue the war if they could. Was it really a disgraceful peace that was feared? was it not rather any peace, no

matter on what terms? Was it war *à outrance*, a war of extermination that was desired? Was such a war possible? Was it just? Was it even so patriotic as it was sincerely believed to be? What would it lead us to? To the turning of France into another Poland. A glorious struggle had been carried on for four months, but our best soldiers were either dead or in captivity, many of our generals were prisoners, the materials of war were becoming exhausted; the country was agitated, a peace party was already formed, and was growing in numbers day by day. Paris had yielded at last; there was no longer room for victory, but only for heroic defeat. We were marching either to exhaustion or destruction. The abandonment of us by Europe was evident and complete. Was it to be eternal? A people who is only conquered may always revive. Sedan, like Jena, may have its morrow. Between a war of extermination and a conditional peace who should be the judge, if not the people, the whole people, voting with full power and freedom? M. Jules Simon did not ask his colleagues to abrogate their decree, he conceded all to them except that impossible clause, the mutilation of Universal Suffrage. But he reasoned, entreated, and commanded in vain; all failed before the invincible determination of M. Gambetta, M. Crémieux, M.

Glais Bizoin, and Admiral Fourichon, who persisted in maintaining the Bordeaux decree with the ineligibility clause intact.

Before leaving for Bordeaux, and during the long hours of the journey, M. Jules Simon had reflected profoundly on the contingencies that might arise, and he had made up his mind that he would neither yield, nor have recourse to an open rupture, unless it should prove absolutely impossible to avoid it. He firmly believed that France could not be saved by an irregularly elected Assembly, and he was no less firmly persuaded that the country could not endure a struggle between two sections of the Republican party. He perceived by the reception he had met with on entering the house of M. Crémieux, and by the first words which were interchanged, that he should gain nothing by discussion. Ought he to rise at the conclusion of the sitting of the Council, protest against the resolutions of his colleagues, read to them the document that invested him with plenary authority, and then retire, after having given them notice that he was about to promulgate the Paris decree without their concurrence? By acting thus he should indeed free himself from his responsibility, but he might probably encounter a check; in any case, such a proceeding would be a commencement of strife.

He had gone from the railway-station to the Prefecture, and from thence to the house of M. Crémieux, without seeing any one. The city was like a camp. M. Gambetta ruled over it. M. Jules Simon, knowing that his colleagues would be as averse to kindling civil war as he was, believed that if he had the municipality of Bordeaux on his side, he would be able to bring about an arrangement. The Mayor, M. Fourcaud, now a member of the Senate, and the municipal councillors, who had been informed of his arrival, presented themselves at this opportune moment, and were ushered into the hall where the Delegates were deliberating. They were all his personal friends, his electors, promoters of his election, members of his committee. In their presence the discussion was renewed with more calmness. M. Jules Simon explained the dissension which had arisen, gave his reasons, and asked them whom they would obey. M. Gambetta in his turn spoke with great eloquence and vehemence. The answer of the Municipal Council was that they would not dissociate themselves from the Delegates, and that the elections at Bordeaux must take place in conformity with the decree that had been posted on the walls in the morning. The Mayor warned M. Jules Simon that this resolution would also be adopted by the National

Guard and the immense majority of the population; certainly by the whole of the Republican portion. M. Jules Simon repeated that he had, for his own part, undertaken the task of securing absolute freedom of choice to the electors; that it was, to his mind, a question of principle and of public safety; that he was resolved to succeed, and that, before the elections were proceeded with, the whole of France should know that the Government of the National Defence desired free elections and a Chamber which should represent, not a party, but the country. He added, "You are entering into a struggle with the Government." They answered, "We know no other Government than that which is here. We greet your entry into it with pleasure. We have obeyed it for four months past, and we will continue to obey such resolutions as shall be adopted by the majority of the members present."

The sitting of the Council terminated at five o'clock, and on its conclusion M. Jules Simon had interviews with M. Glais Bizoin and Admiral Fourichon, separately. Each of these gentlemen repeated to him that he was resolved to follow the majority of the Delegates, and M. Glais Bizoin added that he personally approved the spirit of the Bordeaux decree and the exclusion of the Bonapartists. Admiral Fourichon spoke in a

totally different sense; he was of the opinion of M. Jules Simon and the Government of Paris, and he regretted that the Delegates had refused to yield.

The popularity of M. Gambetta with the Republican party was immense; so great, indeed, that three days afterwards, on Sunday, February 4th, a public meeting was convened at the Grand Théatre, in order to confer the Dictatorship upon him. He had the good sense to refuse to attend the meeting, and to disavow all complicity with the projects of his fanatical friends. M. Jules Simon, on the contrary, was deposed from his former popularity; and held accountable, as were all the members of the Government of Paris, for the capitulation. The truth is that, but for them, the siege would not have lasted two months; but this truth, which, even now, almost every one denies, would not have been believed by any single individual on the day after the surrender. M. Glais Bizoin did justice to the Government, but only up to the moment of the capitulation "There should have been a sortie," he said; "the 300,000 men of the National Guard and the army ought to have been hurled upon the enemy." He declared that he would yield to the majority, but should vote with M. Gambetta and M. Crémieux. Admiral Fourichon, who cherished no illusions whatever about the propriety of a "torrential sortie,"

founded his objection upon the resolution announced by M. Glais Bizoin. "What would be the use of voting with you?" he inquired of M. Jules Simon, "we should never be more than two against three."

M. Jules Simon did not fail to point out to his two colleagues that the Delegates, strictly speaking, formed only a portion of the Government of Paris, that the Paris decree was signed by seven members of the Government, while that of Bordeaux was signed by only four, so that there was a majority for the Paris decree. He was answered that this matter was not one of logic, that the majority mustered at Bordeaux, and that at the bottom of all this there lay a question of civil war.

M. Thiers was at Bordeaux. M. Jules Simon went to him, and laid the facts of the case before him. The first sentence uttered by M. Thiers was, "Your decree must be published." It was by no means clear that such a step would be possible. The Government existing at Bordeaux refused to recognize this decree. Could it be believed that in the face of that refusal they would quietly allow it to be published in the newspapers and posted on the walls side by side with their own opposition manifesto? If publicity were denied to it within the city of Bordeaux, was it to

be hoped that they could succeed in publishing it outside? It was clear that the *Bulletin des Lois*, which had been despatched by the Paris post, had not been suffered to pass the Loire. What had become of the copies which M. Jules Simon himself had distributed on his way from Paris to Bordeaux? Those persons who had received them from his own hand at Orleans, Vierzon, Limoges, and Périgueux had been unable to get them reprinted for distribution, or published in the newspapers. It was useless to resort to a simple announcement by telegraph, because the officials would be forbidden to transmit the message. The post remained, but this also was far from being a safe expedient. Nevertheless M. Jules Simon determined to try it, and while he was with M. Thiers, M. Lavertujon and some other trustworthy and devoted friends prepared the packets. None of those which contained printed matter reached their destination; only private letters addressed to non-official persons were allowed to pass.

But even had the decree forced its way through every obstacle, it could only have reached the departments as a piece of news, and news in a sense proscribed, whereas the Bordeaux decree, transmitted by official despatch, was already posted up everywhere. The prefects, perceiving that a struggle was going on between two sections of

the Government, would consider themselves free to choose between the rival decrees. Who were those prefects? They were friends and creatures of M. Gambetta, who had selected and appointed them, and who had for four months had sole and entire authority over them. The greater number were so devoted to the policy of war to the knife, that it might easily be foreseen they would carry the Bordeaux decree into execution with extreme reluctance. As for the Paris decree, they would reject it at once, holding it of no account whatever. Supposing that even a few of them were to accept the policy of the Paris decree, their number would be very small, the elections would be carried on under various conditions in the several places; there could be no result except trouble and confusion. In short, nothing could be done. No action of any kind was possible so long as the Delegates should persist in their opposition.

M. Thiers did not require a statement of these objections from M. Jules Simon; he had foreseen them all. But, at first, perceiving no other issue than a struggle between the two sections of the Government, he inclined to advise immediate action. "You have no time to wait," were his words; "you will have at least a legion of the National Guard with you, and you may perhaps

reckon on the neutrality of the rest. You must feel the pulse of General Billot's troops. Dispose of me as you will," he added, with his usual resolution and promptitude, "if my name or my presence can serve you, I am ready."

M. Jules Simon was of opinion that recourse to forcible measures, even supposing it to be successful, a result of which he felt by no means certain, would be a calamity. Before coming to a decision of so serious a nature he wished to be able to plead the excuse of absolute necessity, and the exhaustion of all other resources. Admiral Fourichon was held back solely by his apprehension of civil war; M. Glais Bizon declared that he would submit to the majority, if a majority could be formed at Bordeaux. This end could be obtained by bringing down three new members of the Government from Paris. They might arrive at Bordeaux on the 6th February at nine o'clock in the morning. There would be time to telegraph to the departments, on this occasion in the name of the entire Government, and under such conditions as these disobedience would be impossible. Doubtless the despatch would arrive very late on the day or the day but one before the vote; but the preparations for the elections were not in question at all; only an exclusion had to be repealed, and this could be effected at the last hour. After

some reflection M. Thiers approved of this plan. He recommended M. Jules Simon to send a number of letters to the departments, to prefects, newspapers, friends, and former colleagues, and he strongly advised him, while believing himself certain of peace, to prepare for war. M. Jules Simon informed M. Thiers that it was his intention to see the generals, but in the utmost secrecy, also certain influential officers of the National Guard, and magistrates; that he would leave nothing to chance, but appeal to the patriotism of all; and that he still entertained a strong hope of success without any open strife.

This plan was carried out from point to point. The first thing to be done was the writing to Paris, and as M. Thiers had advised that the post should not be employed, but that the letters should be confided to a friend, M. Cochéry was selected, and he consented to start that same evening. He stopped at Orleans, and from thence made known to M. Jules Favre what was passing at Bordeaux. M. Alfred Liouville left on the following day, and was present in Paris on the 4th February at the sitting of the Council in which the Bordeaux decree was officially annulled.

While M. Cochéry and M. Albert Liouville were on their way to Paris, M. Jules Simon saw the representatives of the press, who were then very

numerous at Bordeaux, and unreservedly explained to them the mission with which he was charged. He wrote, and the friends who were with him wrote for him, a great number of letters for the departments, and, as he feared that his handwriting might be recognized, or that letters addressed to political personages would be intercepted, he addressed several to merchants, and to Professors, and had the addresses written by other hands. Afterwards he conferred with the generals and magistrates. One general who had in the first instance promised him assistance in the improbable case of his finding himself obliged to resort to force, refused it at the last moment. Another, General Foltz, promised unreservedly to support him. The minister explained to him that he had certain reasons for expecting the resignation of M. Gambetta on Monday, the 6th February, at nine o'clock in the morning, but that if, contrary to all expectation, the circumstances which would bring about that resignation did not take place, the Prefecture must be seized without a moment's delay, so that the postal and telegraphic services should be available during the whole of the afternoon. He added that the surest means of averting a collision would be to discourage resistance by the display of a nimposing military force.

The General replied that he had only a very

small number of men under his command, and that the power of authorizing the transfer of regiments from one territorial division to another was exclusively reserved to the Minister of War; but M. Jules Simon had foreseen this difficulty before he left Paris, and was the bearer of a blank decree of nomination of a Minister of War, which he filled up with the name of General Foltz. This document was then placed in the hands of the first president, M. Cellerier, with all the decrees necessary to empower him to proceed with the elections. In case of M. Jules Simon's being arrested before the 6th February, M. Cellerier was to publish these decrees immediately, and General Foltz was to seize the Prefecture, according to a carefully prepared plan which could not fail of success.

Thus everything was provided for. On the morning of the 6th three members of the Government of Paris were to arrive at Bordeaux, and terminate the crisis by their presence. If by any unforeseen accident they should not be in the train which would arrive at nine o'clock, the troops were to be drawn up around the Prefecture at eleven a.m.; at noon the orders of the Government of Paris would be carried by telegraph into all the departments. Thus, at any rate, freedom of election would be secured.

On the 2nd February, in the evening, two important personages, both members of the Assembly, and one of whom had been for a long time a minister, called on M. Jules Simon, and made strenuous efforts to induce him to take forcible measures on the following day. They reiterated their arguments many times. A struggle between the Governments of Paris and Bordeaux, that is to say, between republicans, did not alarm them, and they affirmed, with no little temerity, that a portion of the National Guard was with them. The representatives of the Monarchical Press also urged M. Simon in the same sense. He, however, resisted all this pressure, without making known either his hopes or his resolutions, but merely declaring, as he had not ceased to do since his arrival, that he was confident of success.

On the morning of the 3rd, the following proclamation, despatched to the prefects by telegraph, was posted on all the walls of Bordeaux :—

"Citizens, I have received the following telegram,—

"'Versailles, 6.40 p.m.

"'Monsieur Léon Gambetta, at Bordeaux.

"'In the name of the freedom of Elections stipulated by the armistice convention I protest against the disposition emanating from you to

deprive numerous categories of French citizens of the right of being elected to the Assembly. Elections made under a rule of arbitrary oppression cannot confer the rights which the armistice convention recognized as those of deputies freely elected.[2] "'(Signed) BISMARCK.'

"Citizens, we were saying a few days ago that Prussia, in order to satisfy her ambition, was reckoning upon an Assembly into which, owing to the shortness of the allotted time, and to our material difficulties of every kind, the adherents and accomplices of the fallen dynasty, allies of Count von Bismarck would be admitted. The decree of exclusion of the 31st January defeated these hopes. The insolent pretension put forward by the Prussian Minister to interfere in the constitution of a French Assembly is the most striking justification of the measures taken by the Government of the Republic. The lesson will not be lost upon any who possess the sentiment of National honour.

"The Minister of the Interior and of War,

"L. GAMBETTA."

Nothing indeed could be more opposed to the right of nations, to justice, and to propriety, than Count Bismarck's despatch; nor could anything

[2] This message was in singularly bad French. The above is a literal translation.

have been more ill-judged. It was openly averred by the followers of M. Gambetta that M. Jules Simon and his colleagues in Paris were neither more nor less than agents of Count Bismarck. Added to this, the Monarchists, by taking sides with M. Jules Simon, made it appear that he was an enemy of the Republic and of Republicans. M. Jules Simon, fully alive to the peril of the situation, knowing besides that he could no longer count on the adhesion of any of the Delegates, and having taken all the necessary measures for securing his freedom of action on the 6th, went to the Prefecture, where his colleagues were assembled, and having read aloud to them the decree which conferred full powers upon him, announced that he was about officially to annul their decree of the 31st January, by which former functionaries of the Empire were declared ineligible for election to the National Assembly. Having made this announcement, he immediately quitted the Council, accompanied by M. Lavertujon, without replying to the vehement interpellation by which he was assailed. From thence he went to the office of the *Gironde* newspaper, and there, in concert with M. Lavertujon, Secretary to the Government, who had come with him from Paris to assist him in this crisis, he drew up the following proclamation:—

"Citizens,

"This morning at 45 minutes past 8 o'clock I received the despatch of Count Bismarck.

"I understand and share the irritation to which that despatch has given rise.

"But the decree of the Government now seated in Paris is dated the 28th January; it was inserted on the 29th in the *Journal Officiel* and the *Bulletin des Lois;* and I am here to exact its application.

"I have never hesitated in requiring the execution of that decree, and I exact it to-day, as I exacted it yesterday, because I believe it to be indispensable to the safety of my country.

"It matters little to me that political adversaries agree upon this point with the Republican party to which I belong. At the present moment everything must yield to the most indispensable of civic duties.

"The decree of Bordeaux only being known to the prefects, and being in course of execution in the departments,

"Seeing that there is Urgency,

"In virtue of the powers conferred upon me by the Government of National Defence, and which are thus conceived:

"In the unforeseen case of resistance by the Delegates to the decrees and orders of the Govern-

ment of National Defence, M. Jules Simon is invested by these presents with absolute full powers to carry them into execution.

"Done at Paris, the 30th January, 1871.

"(Signed) Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, General Trochu, Emmanuel Arago, Garnier Pagès, Eugène Pelletan.

"I make known to the public the following decree,—

"Article 1.—The elections shall take place in all the departments on the 8th February, conformably to the decree published at Bordeaux by the Delegates of the Government, but with the following modification: the choice of the electors may be exercised upon every French citizen, not legally ineligible, and having attained the prescribed age. Every kind of incapacity set forth by former laws and decrees, and especially by the decree published at Bordeaux on the 31st January, is abolished.

"Article 2.—The Assembly shall meet at Bordeaux on Sunday, the 12th February. The Government of the National Defence will immediately place its powers in the hands of the Assembly.

"Done at Bordeaux, the 3rd February, 1871.

"The Delegate Member of the Government,

"JULES SIMON.

"The Delegate Secretary of the Government,

"ANDRÉ LAVERTUJON."

The *Gironde* printed this document at once, and supplied a great number of proofs, which were sent to all the newspapers. It also printed large posters, which were immediately distributed to the bill-stickers. A letter was written to the Mayor of Bordeaux, in which he was requested to take immediate steps for the official publication; and a copy of the proclamation was sent to the telegraph office for prompt transmission to the prefects.

These efforts to procure the promulgation of the decree were useless, as was to be expected, and as M. Jules Simon had known from the first that they would be. The Delegates had one of two courses to take: either they must submit to the orders received from Paris, or they must maintain their own decree and prevent the promulgation of the other.

The Delegates prohibited the transmission of the decree by either post or telegraph, and threatened the bill-stickers with imprisonment if a single poster should appear. The *Gironde* and all the newspapers of the 4th February which contained the decree of M. Jules Simon were seized by an order emanating from the Prefect of the Gironde, and couched in the following terms:—

"The Prefect of the Gironde orders M. Leclerc, Commissary of Police, immediately to seize all the

copies of the —— newspaper, No. —, after he shall have satisfied himself that the said newspaper contains a pretended decree relative to the elections, signed 'Jules Simon,' or 'André Lavertujon,' and to place the copies seized at the disposal of the Procureur of the Republic.

"Bordeaux, the 4th February, 1871."

The letter, signed by the Prefect of the Gironde, is marked "Approved.

"The Director of General Safety,

"RANC."

On the same day, the 4th February, several persons informed M. Jules Simon that it had been seriously proposed to have him arrested. Admiral Fourichon had strongly opposed the motion, and he had been seconded by M. Glais-Bizoin. The enemies of the Republic spread this report in hopes of widening the breach between the two sections of the Government. M. Glais-Bizoin said to M. Jules Simon, "It has been decided that you are not to be allowed any means of addressing the public, but your personal liberty will not be molested."

The representatives of the newspapers that had been seized came to M. Jules Simon to protest against the measure of which they were the victims. They placed in his hands a protest which ended thus: "In virtue of the unlimited

powers you have received from the Government of Paris in order to secure the execution of this decree, we demand that you shall cause the liberty of the press and submission to the law to be respected in our persons." The individuals who signed this protest knew perfectly well that he to whom they addressed it had, at that moment, no other means of getting justice done to them than by resorting to force. They thought, with the two other personages already mentioned, that the battalions of the National Guard belonging to the central quarters might be relied upon; and some among them would perhaps have seen the two sections of the Government come to fisticuffs without much regret. M. Jules Simon, on the contrary, could not regard such an eventuality otherwise than as the greatest of misfortunes.

He was convinced that if a struggle should take place on that day, with the uncertain support of a few battalions, it would turn out ill for the cause that he was charged to defend. He hoped that a peaceful solution would be reached in two days, and when that time should have come, if his hopes were not realized, there was a resource remaining, on which he might reckon securely. He therefore limited his action to the drawing up of the following declaration in answer to the protest of the newspaper editors,

forwarding it to the Delegates and to the newspapers concerned, at the same time sending a copy, signed by himself and M. Lavertujon, to M. Cellerier :—

"DECLARATION.

"The decree unanimously adopted by the Government of National Defence is dated the 28th January, 1871.

"It was inserted in the *Journal Officiel* on the 29th, and placarded in Paris on the same day. It was ordered on the 28th that it should be sent into all the departments.

"I do not think it advisable to publish the entire text of that decree, or to maintain all its dispositions, as I desire to avoid any confusion between the instructions already received, and those which would result from the decree of the 28th January.

"But I repeat the declaration that the decree which was passed on the 28th, published on the 29th, and signed by all the members present in Paris, contains the express clause that all French citizens in enjoyment of their civil rights are eligible.

"I have been charged, not only with the execution of this decree, but especially to watch over the preservation intact of universal suffrage.

"I was authorized, if need were, to conform in

other respects to the views of the Delegates; but I am the bearer of an imperative mandate so to act that all citizens who are in the enjoyment of their civil rights shall be eligible.

"The decree is perfectly regular; my powers have been communicated to the Delegates, I maintain the text of that decree in the most formal manner.

"The journals that have published it have acted in conformity with right and law. The seizure of those journals is illegal. Those persons who have ordered, and, pursuant to Article 75, those who have executed that seizure, are responsible for the obstacles opposed by them to the liberty of the press.

"Bordeaux, 5th February, 1871.

"(Signed) JULES SIMON,

"ANDRÉ LAVERTUJON."

Each time that the delegate of the Government of Paris had to write a declaration or a letter, he was careful to repeat the terms of the Paris decree, to explain its motives, and to point out its legality. In spite of the close watch that was kept upon all his actions, his mission had become known at Bordeaux, and a certain number of his letters had reached the public. The Delegates had from the beginning adopted the expedient of casting a doubt, which they did not entertain, upon the

authenticity of the decree. They had demanded not only the text, but the original minute, signed by the members of the Government; with which M. Jules Simon had not been furnished, no demand of the kind having been anticipated, and, more especially, because the decree had been printed in the *Journal Officiel* and in the *Bulletin des Lois*, and distributed broadcast since the 29th January. As railway communication between Bordeaux and the capital was restored, it was supposed at Paris that the decree had been published in the usual way. At the first suggestion of this strange and insulting suspicion, M. Jules Simon, who was present at the Council of the Delegates, instead of giving way to indignation, as he might fairly have done, at once proposed that they should telegraph to Paris, so that the question might be settled by the answer of M. Jules Favre. This was at first agreed to, at least in appearance, but on the following day M. Jules Simon learned that the proposed telegram had not been sent, "because messages had to pass through the hands of Count Bismarck," and that the question had been put by means of a carrier-pigeon.

The pigeon never reached Paris; and, when at length, after the seizure of the newspapers, public rumours became almost threatening, it was decided,

notwithstanding the despatch of the carrier, to send M. Crémieux to Paris, with a commission to ascertain whether "the pretended decree" was, or was not, a reality. This decision, with the words "pretended decree," was posted on the walls of the city, a fact of which M. Jules Simon was apprised by a member of the Government, who was indeed indignant at it, but who had, nevertheless, added his own signatures to the other three. M. Jules Simon, who was resolved to accomplish his purpose, but to take no personal questions or incidents whatever into account, merely shrugged his shoulders. On the 5th, M. Crémieux started for Paris, and at Vierzon he encountered Messieurs Garnier Pagès, Emmanuel Arago, and Pelletan, who brought him back with them to Bordeaux, where the party arrived on the 6th at nine o'clock a.m. So soon as their arrival was made known, and that it was evident the majority of the Government at Bordeaux were resolved upon the suppression of the ineligibility clause, no difficulty was made about the despatch of the decree by telegraph even in anticipation of the meeting of the Council. M. Jules Simon himself took it to the Director-General, who had it sent off immediately in every quarter. By direction of M. Jules Simon, General Foltz at once rescinded the order by which the troops were confined

to barracks. The crisis had ended peacefully, after an anxious contest of a week's duration, and a good understanding was re-established between the members of the Government of National Defence.

One source of grave anxiety remained. What would the prefects do?

M. Gambetta had always been of opinion that the elections ought to take place, provided they should be conducted on his system. All his prefects (or nearly all), held with him on the second point, the exclusion of the Bonapartists; a few only obeyed, in trembling, on the first, the convocation of the electors. At Toulouse, M. Duportal, the prefect, published the following proclamation:—

"Dear Fellow-Citizens,

"In conformity with the unanimous desire of true and tried patriots, the Government of the Republic proposed to postpone the convocation of the electors until it should have accomplished the patriotic mandate of National Defence, which it had courageously accepted. The fortune of war and the adverse destiny of France have otherwise disposed. Afflicting truth, which nevertheless must be told! It is beneath the triumphant roar of the cannon of the invader, under the bloody heel of the Prussian, that we are called to vote!" &c., &c., &c.

On the 31st January, the municipality of Saint Étienne sent a deputation to M. Gambetta, bearing an address which was posted the same day on the walls of Saint Étienne, and contained the following passage :—

"Take every energetic measure for continuing the war; either an honourable peace, or war to complete exhaustion.

"We again demand from you absolute powers, both civil and military, for our departmental authority, so that every individual capable of carrying arms may be enrolled, without any exception whatever.

"As for the Elections, if they are to take place, and it is our opinion that they ought not to be held, we demand that it shall be decreed that all those who have directly served the Empire, senators, chamberlains, prefects, and others, and also all place-seekers shall be ineligible to the Constituent Assembly.

"We demand, besides, that every refractory individual shall be deprived of the vote."

The prefect of Bouches du Rhône, an active and intelligent man, had gone so far as to send in his resignation rather than co-operate in the formation of a National Assembly. At the entreaty of M. Gambetta, he consented to retain office and to publish the Bordeaux decree, but he refused

to the end, even after the resignation of M. Gambetta, to give official publicity to the acts of the Government of Paris. In the sitting of the 11th March, 1871, M. Cochéry related the details of this incident. "M. Gent," he said, "being called upon to furnish us with explanations, replied, that in fact he had received, on the 30th January, a telegram, despatched from Bordeaux, by which he was enjoined to publish the decree of convocation for the elections of the 8th February, but M. Gent was opposed to the elections, and a partisan of war *à outrance*. Consequently he telegraphed on the same day to the Minister of the Interior that he could not accept this new policy, and that he requested a successor might be sent to replace him, and to fulfil the electoral formalities.

"Not until the 3rd February did M. Gent, yielding to urgent ministerial remonstrances, consent to allow the decree of convocation to be printed and placarded.

"It is equally certain that the decrees of the 29th January, the annulment of the ineligibility clause, and the resignation of M. Gambetta were not officially published by the Prefect of Bouches du Rhône."

M. Gent, M. Duportal, and the Mayor of Saint Étienne were not unsupported in their protest

against the convocation of the electors. They and the other malcontents, however, resigned themselves, provided that the conditions of the Bordeaux decree on the elections were maintained, i. e. with the ineligibility clause. The prefect of a central department summoned a young lawyer, who had received a letter from M. Jules Simon, and was distributing copies of it, before him, and threatened him with imprisonment and a prosecution. Many similar examples might be quoted, and also proclamations by prefects and sub-prefects, in which the Government of Paris was violently attacked. M. Paul Bert, Prefect of the Nord, a celebrated *savant*, and a distinguished man in every respect, had taken elaborate precautions to prevent the election of functionaries and candidates of the Empire. The placard setting forth the names of the candidates to be excluded is dated 6th February :—

"List of Candidates declared Ineligible.

Brame (Jules), former Minister of the Empire.
Plichon, former Minister of the Empire.
Des Rotours, Official Candidate in 1868 and 1869."

A few hours afterwards the Lille newspapers, with the text of the decree promulgated in Paris on the 29th January, reached the prefect, and he

immediately issued a proclamation, which contains these words:—

"This decree by the Government, prisoners in Paris, and for a period of four months ignorant of the state of the provinces, unable to communicate freely with them, and ignorant of what their own delegates at Bordeaux were doing, cannot, either in strict law or in equity, be placed in opposition with the decree by the Delegates at Bordeaux, who were in full possession of freedom of thought and action. It is only reasonable that the decree of the 31st January should have the force of law, even admitting the existence of that of the 29th."

Four prefects only refused to apply the ineligibility clause: M. Mestreau, Prefect of Charente-Inférieure, M. Achille Delorme, Prefect of Calvados, M. Emile Lenoël, Prefect of La Manche, and M. Ricard, Commissary-General for Deux-Sèvres and Vienne. M. Ricard sent the following note to M. Jules Simon:—"I am told that you are the bearer of a decree which confirms the eligibility of all citizens. Let me be informed of the text of it, and I will answer to you for its being obeyed wherever I have authority."

At the sitting of the 9th March, 1871, M. Bethmont read aloud the telegrams that had

been exchanged between M. Mestreau and M. Gambetta.

"M. Mestreau to the Minister of the Interior.

"It is impossible for me to publish the documents which you have just forwarded to me; they would produce a most unfavourable effect in Charente-Inférieure."

"The Minister to M. Mestreau.

"I am not concerned with the spirit of your department, but with that of all France. In my double capacity as Minister and Republican, I give you a formal order under my personal responsibility, to publish my proclamation."

"M. Mestreau to the Minister.

"It is in view of the general condition of France, as well as that of my own department, and also under the inspiration of Republican principles, not authoritative, that I have refused to publish your proclamation, in which an outrage is inflicted on the Government of National Defence. I therefore maintain my former declaration."

On his resignation, M. Gambetta addressed an important circular to the prefects, in which, while holding to his opinion with regard to the Bonapartists, he formally advised that the elections should be proceeded with; and this counsel, emanating from him, put an end to all hesitation.

"Bordeaux, 6th February, 1871, 3 p.m.

"The Minister of the Interior to the Prefects and Sub-Prefects.

"Notwithstanding the grave objections arising from the execution of the Convention of Versailles, I had determined to cause the elections to be proceeded with, that by so doing I might furnish an incontestable proof of moderation and sincerity, and also remain at my post until relieved.

"You are aware, Monsieur, from the various documents which have been sent to you, what is to be the nature and character of those elections; nevertheless I am convinced that, notwithstanding the material difficulties of every kind heaped upon us by the enemy, a faithful and resolute Assembly will be their outcome.

"I consider that our decree was called for alike by justice as regards the accomplices of the imperial rule, who are responsible for it, and prudence in view of foreign intrigues. It has elicited an insulting protest from Count Bismarck.

"Since then, on the 4th February, 1871, the members of the Government of Paris have suppressed our decree by a legislative measure. They have also sent Messieurs Garnier Pagès, Eugène Pelletan, and Arago, who signed the decree of

abrogation, to Bordeaux, with their commission to apply it.

"This is at once a disavowal and a dismissal of the Minister of the Interior and of War.

"A fundamental difference of opinion from both the exterior and the interior point of view is therefore manifest beyond all doubt. My conscience tells me that it is my duty to resign my functions as a minister of the Government, with which I no longer have ideas or hopes in common.

"I have the honour to inform you that I have this day sent in my resignation, and to thank you for the patriotic and steady support you have afforded me in my endeavours to bring the task which I had undertaken to a successful termination.

"Let me say to you that, on reflection, I am convinced, seeing how grave are the interests at stake, and how little time is at our disposal, you will render a supreme service to the Republic by proceeding with the elections of the 8th February. Thus you will obtain time, to enable you to take such resolutions as you shall think proper.

"Receive the assurance of my fraternal sentiments.

"LÉON GAMBETTA."

The Council met at the house of M. Crémieux, immediately after the arrival of Messieurs Garnier Pagès, Arago, and Pelletan. M. Gambetta did not attend; he sent in his resignation by letter, and his colleagues met him next in the Assembly. Admiral Fourichon had always desired this solution of the difficulty; M. Glais-Bizoin felt himself beaten, and said so, but received his three friends with no less cordiality on that account. M. Crémieux yielded to the necessity of the case, while he bitterly regretted the defeated policy, and persisted in believing that the war might still have been carried on. He tendered his resignation on the following day, but the Council begged him to withdraw it, as all the members of the Government were to resign collectively in five days from that time.

Short though the interval was, it was necessary to appoint a successor to M. Gambetta. M. Jules Simon had been already appointed in that capacity. The newly-arrived Delegates brought him his nomination, signed by General Trochu, Jules Favre, Arago, Pelletan, Garnier Pagès, and Ernest Picard. M. Glais-Bizoin exclaimed against this appointment, which, as he said, aggravated the defeat of the Delegates.

"I resign myself to being beaten," said he, "but not to being beaten to this extent." M.

Crémieux also said that it was unwise to pass from M. Gambetta to that identical member of the Government who represented the most moderate policy; and such was likewise M. Jules Simon's own opinion. He felt convinced that the Council, composed as it was now, would, after this sitting, be unanimous in its resolutions. The whole question was merely the substitution of one name for another. He thought the name of M. Arago would have more authority than his own with the prefects who had been appointed by M. Gambetta. They had almost all gone against him during the week of struggle that had just expired; it would be easier for them to submit to the new orders they were about to receive, if those orders were not signed by him. These reasons seemed conclusive. The consent of M. Emmanuel Arago was obtained, but not without difficulty. A circular was immediately drawn up, and addressed by telegraph to all the prefects and sub-prefects of the uninvaded departments.

At Bordeaux everything went off smoothly. In the evening M. Arago presented himself at the meeting of the Municipal Council and was warmly received. The popularity and good management of M. Fourcaud aided materially in preventing any disturbance. None took place indeed in any part

of France. The elections were held on the 8th, conformably with the Paris decree, and on Sunday, the 12th February, the Assembly met, to declare itself constituted.

CHAPTER II.

THE ASSEMBLY AT BORDEAUX.

It would be difficult for any one who had not seen the city of Bordeaux when it was the capital of France, to form an idea of the busy and bustling crowd which at that time filled the hotels and thronged the streets. The handsome, refined, calm, and kindly city had become for the nonce a political capital, a "Bourse" on a gigantic scale, and the head-quarters of a large military force. The Place des Quinconces was occupied by cannon; the Prefecture was the residence of M. Gambetta, but the Government, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of War, the Police and Telegraph Administrations, and the Prefecture of the Gironde were also lodged there. In the vast rooms set apart for the use of the General Council, clerks, who had been employed under the Empire, worked beneath the eyes of their directors like schoolboys with the master's

cane in view; the prefect's cabinet, the former reception-rooms, and even the antechambers were crowded by persons of another class, equally busy and bustling, who might have been seen five months before in the offices of the democratic newspapers. The all-powerful minister enjoyed no privacy. When he needed a little quietness, while writing an order or a circular, he took refuge behind a screen. He gave audiences to the crowd on the balcony, to deputations at the stairhead, and to individuals behind the door. The grand staircase was thronged like that of a railway-station when the trains are starting. Ministers and Generals made their way through the press with their elbows; a space would be cleared only for the master and two or three of his familiars. This buzzing and swarming crowd was enlivened by a great variety of costumes. M. Gambetta had shown incomparable activity in the creation of armies;—all the anger and ill-will of his enemies can never deprive him of credit on that score—he had also created officers in great profusion, and those officers had created uniforms. Civil functionaries indulged in them to their hearts' content; a director of telegraphs wore a plumed hat, and gold lace like a general. The Bordeaux people who remained quietly at

their business hardly recognized their own city; their streets, their Prefecture, their theatres, their counting-houses, indeed their own houses. In the course of three months Bordeaux was taken by assault two or three times by different armies; by civil functionaries, by speculators in all kinds of business, by officials, and finally, after the retirement of M. Gambetta, by deputies.

Only eight days were allowed for the transaction of the onerous business of the elections, which, in ordinary times, sets so many persons in motion; and those eight days were fertile in unexpected occurrences in the uninvaded departments. Operations had been commenced on the 2nd or 3rd February, in obedience to the Bordeaux decree; then, almost on the eve of the voting day, came the decrees of M. Jules Simon and the Government of Paris. In several departments the prefects had been obliged to alter their instructions and to contradict their proclamations. A few of them retired. The new prefect of Lille, M. Hendlé, arrived on the voting day itself. No less pressing, although of a different kind, were the difficulties under which the departments invaded by the Prussians laboured. As there were no longer any prefects in those departments, a circular issued by M. Hérold, Minister of the Interior, transferred the most essential portion of

their functions to the mayors of the various townships. The enemy, who desired that the Assembly should be summoned, offered no obstacle to the proceedings. Liberty to meet, to advertise, to correspond and to vote was unchecked, but the state of siege was, in itself, a terrible impediment. Almost all the *Mairies* were turned into barracks, the electoral lists were lost or destroyed, the railroads were either blocked up or torn up, many of the most active and important citizens were serving with the army. Nevertheless, the elections were held all over France at the appointed hour. They were conducted in freedom and with regularity. M. Thiers bore witness to this in the sitting of the 10th March, 1871. "Never," said he, "no never, has a country been more sincerely interrogated, and never has it answered more sincerely than on the recent occasion.

"The country was in great part occupied, but where that was the case, the foreigners did not meddle with your elections. In the other portions of France certain prefects would have liked to meddle with them, but they had not time.

"Thus, because the foreigner regarded them with indifference, and the previous administration had not time to interfere, the elections were not in any way impeded."

It has since been repeatedly alleged that the Government of National Defence brought pressure to bear on the electors, but this accusation is not only false, it is absurd. The Assembly, which was not to be suspected of a leaning towards the Government, granted only one inquiry,—in the case of the department of Vaucluse,—and annulled, in all, only five returns, those respectively of M. Cyprien Chaix in the Hautes Alpes; M. Marc-Dufraisse in the Alpes-Maritimes; M. Mestreau in Charente-Inférieure; M. Lamorte in Drôme, and M. Girot-Ponzol in Puy-de-Dôme. These elections were annulled solely in virtue of the principle of the ineligibility of prefects in the departments under their own administration. It is therefore quite true that the elections throughout all France were declared valid, with the exception of those of one department only.

The Delegates had authorized the candidateship of prefects in their own departments (although it was a departure from their principles) for the reason that the circumstances of the case were completely exceptional, and that it would have been unjust to disqualify men who had accepted office, not as a career, but as an opportunity of rendering disinterested service to the country.

M. Jules Simon, whose object it was not to dishearten the prefects, did not wish to provoke to disobedience those who might have offered themselves as candidates several days before the existence of his decree had come to their knowledge. As it happened, the greater number of the prefects abstained from offering themselves as candidates. Only eleven prefects and two sub-prefects were returned. Several of those who were elected had sent in their resignation in time. M. Marc-Dufraisse, whose seat was invalidated, was elected simultaneously in the department of the Seine. The other four presented themselves anew, and were re-elected.

Not a single case of corrupt practices was even alleged, and some instances of intimidation which it was attempted to exaggerate were not proven; the Assembly took no heed of them. Several prefects had advised the electors to vote for war *à outrance;* but the change which had taken place in the administration two days previously had nullified their influence, which was not, indeed, important beforehand, for every one knew that they were about to vacate their posts. Their promises were not to be relied upon, nor were their threats to be feared. At the date of the elections the Government and their agents of every degree, including the mayors, possessed moral authority

only over those who were of their way of thinking; whosoever was not entirely with them was against them. The Government of Paris was reproached with the capitulation, the Government of Bordeaux with a Dictatorship. In reality the only collective influence was that of the clergy, who had remained at their posts, with their organization intact, while war and revolution had profoundly troubled and terribly thinned the ranks of lay society. From that time forth the clergy openly and ardently joined in the strife of parties.

On the day after the elections the deputies began to arrive at Bordeaux. Several of them came direct from the army, or from the ambulances, and had not allowed themselves a glimpse of their homes. A few were still wearing their regimental uniforms. The Grand Théâtre had been arranged as a temporary Assembly House; a purpose which the large and commodious building served admirably, with but one drawback. It was not lighted from the outside, and therefore gas had to be used on all occasions. The Lecture-Room was assigned for the use of the public, the actors' dressing-rooms and the property-rooms were arranged as best they might be for the use of the officials.

The Assembly met at three o'clock in the after-

noon of the 12th February, in the green-room. At first it was proposed only to get intelligence, but Count Benoist d'Azy, who was summoned to preside at the sitting as the senior member present, moved that considering the gravity of the circumstances, the Assembly should at once declare itself constituted. This proposal was unanimously adopted. Provisional officers were also elected. M. Benoist d'Azy was to continue to act as President. M. Duchâtel, M. de Castellane, M. Paul de Remusat, and M. L'Ebraly were appointed Secretaries. The Assembly adjourned until the following day for the verification of powers. A considerable number of deputies were already present. When on the 16th the Assembly proceeded to elect the permanent officials, there were no less than 533 voters.

Neither the Paris Government nor the Bordeaux Delegates had thought of defining the powers of the Assembly, or of fixing a term to its mandate. It was evident that the Assembly as the outcome of universal suffrage possessed absolute and sovereign power, and that from the moment of its meeting its authority was sole and supreme in France. It was generally believed that the Assembly had been summoned to decide upon peace or war; that its mission would terminate with the vote which should finally dispose of this

formidable question, and that afterwards it would have nothing to do except to pass an electoral law, and summon its successors. Those who are familiar with history know that an Assembly always takes all the powers it can get, and always lasts as long as it can. Doubtless, however, the deputies would have been astonished if they had been told that they should sit for four years, and should make a Constitution.

The list of the newly-elected deputies, upon whom the fate of the country depended, was studied with considerable anxiety at this time. The indications afforded by it were by no means clear. It included several new names, and it was rightly believed that there would be numerous conversions among the former deputies. Everything was conjectural, and the most skilful statisticians dared not claim complete accuracy.

One important, salient, and reassuring fact was that only a few Bonapartists had been returned. They numbered thirty in all, and the only well-known men in the little group were M. Conti, M. Gavini, M. Gallioni, M. Daru, and M. Brame. Two-thirds of this small party, who afterwards formed the nucleus of the group known as that of "The Appeal to the People," would have indignantly repudiated the appellation of "Bonapartists." The apprehensions of M. Gambetta that

a Chamber composed of former official candidates might be returned were very wide of the mark. France had remembered the 2nd of December, the mixed commissions, the transportations, the law of Public Safety, Mexico, and Sedan. The head of the Bonapartist party, M. Rouher, was then abroad. He did not offer himself as a candidate until the elections of the 2nd July, when he was beaten in Charente-Inférieure and the Gironde. M. Séverin Abbatucci was obliged to resign in order to secure M. Rouher's seat for the department of Corsica, which was then regarded as a Bonapartist pocket-borough. The party could not pretend that it was a victim to the Bordeaux decree, for it was not more fortunate on the 2nd July than on the 8th February.

On the other hand, the number of republicans amounted to only 250; and this was a disappointment. It was, however, to be expected that all the Monarchical parties would league themselves together against the Republic; and that although the Republic would win in the end, it must be some time before it could be declared the definitive Government of France, and still longer before it could be secured against aggressive attempts by the beaten parties. If the elections could have been held in September or October 1870, an almost

entirely Republican Assembly would have been returned.

The resurrection of the Legitimist party was a novel and unexpected event, chiefly explicable by the intervention of the clergy. This was a party of which France knew nothing, which was believed to be extinct. It had, for a long time, been composed of leaders without soldiers; but now all the leaders were elected. It became evident, after a few sittings, that the representatives of the old régime were ignorant of public affairs, and that they did not number among them any of those superior men who lend brilliancy to their party, who force other parties to fear it, and who occasionally succeed, by dint either of political ability or oratorical talent, in displacing a majority.

It was otherwise with the Right Centre, a group which outnumbered that of the Republicans, and in which were included M. Thiers, M. Dufaure, M. Leonce de Lavergne, M. Casimir Perrier, M. Laboulaye, and a number of learned and eloquent men, accustomed to public business, and to the handling of assemblies, governing men who had been thrown into opposition by the Empire, and who, if they should prove sufficiently high-minded to keep clear of former prejudices and the interests of a clique, could not fail to exercise a preponderating influence in the Assembly.

Thus, the Right Centre was the most important group; next in order came the Republicans, with some first-rate speakers, M. Jules Favre, M. Gambetta, M. Pelletan and M. Picard; after them the Legitimists; and lastly, the Bonapartists, in an insignificant minority. If to all these be added thirty individuals whose opinions nobody knew anything about, tentative, expectant persons, who certainly did not themselves know how they ought to be classified, an almost exact estimate may be formed of the state of parties at the opening of the Assembly.

No group had the majority. The Right Centre and the Republicans came first, with unequal forces; and this result was discouraging to the Bonapartists, and disheartening to the Republicans. The only party who were justified in congratulating themselves, and in thinking that France was coming back to them, were the adherents of Constitutional Monarchy. They were accustomed to look upon Republicans as devoid of political ability, and they calculated that the check which the Republican party had received through them in February, 1871, would be still more complete when the supplementary elections should have taken place. The Republicans could not fail to make mistakes, and they themselves would not fail to profit by those errors.

Then, too, every man of the Legitimist party who was not too deeply pledged, every man who was capable of taking a correct view of the state of modern society, would join the Constitutional Monarchists. Was it not essential, above all, to escape the Republic? A second time in the course of the century, the Constitutionalists would be a necessary expedient. In the first place they were certain to place M. Thiers at the head of the Government. And then, as if to secure the triumph of the Right Centre, no sooner had the Republicans met together than they began to quarrel among themselves.

M. Gambetta and the other leaders of the Republican party had seen the double danger that awaited the Republic from the Orleanists on the one side, and the Bonapartists on the other. Against the latter they had the resource of the decree of ineligibility, which they held to be justified as a sort of *lex talionis*, in retaliation for the official candidateships of the Empire; but they had no such weapon to use against Constitutional Monarchy. They believed rightly that all persons of superior intelligence would end by regarding the Republic as the only Government possible and the best of Governments, and that the great body of the nation, freed from the delusion of Cæsarism,

could not but embrace the Republican cause. Progress, however, in human societies, does not tread with even and measured pace; it springs forward, then it recoils; it is subject to interruptions, until, having triumphed over final obstacles, it at length acquires irresistible force. If the members of the Right Centre had obeyed one leader, if they had practised the only kind of disinterestedness which a party can exhibit, that is to say patience; if, above all, they had remained faithful to that liberal policy which they had so loudly demanded under the Empire, instead of making common cause with the reaction and with clericalism, France might have recommenced, under less enduring conditions, the experiment of 1830. Their internal divisions were a happy chance for the Republic. They had nothing in common except their attachment to the representative system and their dislike of running risks. The dissensions in the party were manifest from the first. A very few among them denied all salvation outside of an Orleanist restoration, and they sacrificed everything to that conviction. The entire political faith of others was summed up in instinctive aversion to democracy, and fear of being deprived of the political and social advantages they enjoyed. They loved liberty in theory, they would

even have consented to administer it to the country, provided they had been permitted to measure the dose. Their conditional and temperate liberalism did not survive the spectacle of the commune, and when three years later it became evident that an Orleanist restoration was impossible, they were forced to choose between two evils, the Empire and the Republic. They made that selection which appeared to them to be the safer, if not the more honourable, and one by one they were seen to enter the Assembly, and take their places in the ranks of the party that hid itself under the name of "The Party of Appeal to the People."

Between the obstinate Orleanists and the Orleanists turned Bonapartists, there existed in the Right Centre a group consisting of one hundred clear-headed men, who were equally incapable of abandoning the principles upon which all society rests, and of renouncing liberty. They would have preferred Constitutional Monarchy to any other form of government; if they had found it established, or if they could have restored it by a vote without violent measures. But they perceived at once that neither the Legitimists nor the Bonapartists would accede to the constitutional form; it would not have a majority either in Parlia-

ment nor among the people, while it was in itself, and from the temperament of its advocates, happily unable to resort to force. They were well aware that the reappearance of the Legitimist party upon the political stage was a brief incident which would have no result; and the only possible monarchy was that which they would not accept at any price, that which openly and unscrupulously appealed to material interests and to force. The Republic inspired them with distrust, which, in some cases, at that time, certainly reached the height of aversion. But, being persuaded that they would have to choose between the Republic and the Empire, and that the Empire would never reconcile itself with the principles of right, with justice, or with liberty, they did not despair of being able to construct a liberal and conservative Republic. In a word, they rejected Legitimacy as chimerical, and dictatorship, whether Republican or Cæsarian, as odious; they preferred a liberal Monarchy to a moderate Republic, but they did not hold that it would be right to bring about a revolution simply that they might make the presidency of the Republic hereditary.

Not only was M. Thiers the head of this party, he was the party itself, for it was by following him, by comprehending his ideas, that the others came to the conclusion that the existing Govern-

ment must be provisionally maintained. Meanwhile, the lists were to be kept open, so that the power of making a free choice between the two forms of constitutional Government should be reserved to the country, which was to withhold its judgment until after the reconstruction of the nation; that is to say, until France should once more possess an army, an administration, and finances.

The sitting of Monday, the 13th February, was in reality the first sitting of the Assembly. It commenced at two o'clock, in the theatre, M. Benoist d'Azy presiding. The Deputies had to struggle to their places through an enormous crowd, who wanted to see the most important and popular among them. Garibaldi, who wore his uniform, and Victor Hugo, were the most closely surrounded and the most loudly applauded. The whole crowd was ardently Republican, and the Deputies of the Right complained of the bewildering shouts of *Vive la République*, which followed them as they entered or issued from the theatre.

M. Jules Favre spoke first; the purport of his address was to place the powers of the Government of National Defence in the hands of the representatives of the country.

"Ever since the members of the Government of

National Defence have been charged with the task which they accepted," said M. Jules Favre, "they have had no greater solicitude or desire than for the arrival of the day when they should find themselves in the presence of the representatives of the people. (*Hear! hear!*)

"They are in that presence now, and under most cruel and grievous circumstances; but, thanks to your patriotism, gentlemen, thanks to that unity among you, to which I feel convinced that we shall not appeal in vain (*Bravo!*), and which, if need were, would be imposed upon us by our misfortunes, by good sense, and by solicitude for the interests of our dear country (*Cheers*), we shall yet heal her wounds and reconstruct her destiny. (*Loud cheers.*)

"To you, gentlemen, belongs this task. We are no longer of any account, except that we are responsible to you for all our acts, and ready to answer for them; knowing that they will be investigated with loyalty; that loyalty which will inspire every deliberation of yours, as you know that it will be our guide in the explanations to be laid before you." (*Unanimous applause.*)

M. Jules Favre added a few words respecting the negotiation which he had opened, and which obliged him to return on that same day to Paris. "My first duty," he said, "will be to

carry back to those with whom we [illegible] ing, the assurance that France [illegible] pen what may, to do her duty bravely. (*Loud applause.*)

"The Assembly will decide with the perfect liberty that is the right of the representatives of the country, careful for nothing save the salvation of France, and her honour." (*Loud applause.*)

The President then read aloud the collective and several letters of resignation of the members of the Government; and afterwards made known to the Assembly the following document,—

"Citizen President of the National Assembly,

"As a last duty rendered to the cause of the French Republic, I have come hither to tender it my vote, which I place in your hands.

"I renounce the mandate, by which I have been honoured by various departments.

"I salute you,

"G. GARIBALDI."

The drawing for the bureaus then took place, and the Assembly adjourned in order that the examination of powers might be proceeded with immediately.

The public were already leaving the galleries,

and the Deputies were quitting the Chamber, when General Garibaldi rose, and asked permission to speak.

He was met with cries from all sides of "It is too late! The sitting is adjourned." A member added, "A deputy who has resigned has no longer any right to speak in an Assembly."

General Garibaldi ought indeed to have spoken during the sitting, and before he sent in his resignation; but the members of the Right were glad of an opportunity of opposing him in this sense, and of refusing him a hearing. Some days later, very severe things were said of him on that side of the Chamber. The members of the Left, on the contrary, came hurrying in again when the rumour spread that Garibaldi wished to speak. The Republicans were not only animated by sentiments of respect and admiration for the General, but they thought the sitting might have been resumed for a few minutes, in consideration of the courtesy due to a foreigner, and the gratitude due to a military leader who had fought for us. Unfortunately they were in the minority. M. Benoist d'Azy resumed his presidential chair, but without removing his hat, and said,—

"I have declared the sitting suspended, and I can only request my colleagues to retire to their

bureaus. I order the galleries to be immediately cleared."

The members dispersed amid considerable commotion. The representatives, who repaired to their bureaus, could hear the acclamations long and loud with which Garibaldi was greeted by the vast multitude outside. He set out for Italy on the same evening.

The Assembly got on rapidly with the examination of powers. On the 16th February the final nominations took place. The president was appointed unanimously, and that president was a Republican. M. Grévy was, however, so plainly indicated by the circumstances, that his election did not furnish a true criterion of the respective strength of parties. Neither the Legitimists nor the Right Centre could possibly have flattered themselves that a candidate of theirs would be elected; the support of the Republican party was indispensable to the success of any one who might be proposed. On the 4th September, M. Grévy had not approved of the Government which was proclaimed at the Hôtel de Ville, and he had refused to accept office under it as Minister of Justice. He had even undertaken to convey the proposals of the Corps Legislatif to the Government on the same evening. He was respected by the Republicans for his

talents, his character, and the sincerity of his convictions, and he had won favour with the Monarchists by steadily holding himself aloof from the revolution from the beginning. M. Thiers, who was all-powerful in the Assembly, and especially over the Right Centre, was the first to pronounce the name of M. Grévy, and not a single objection was raised. The state of parties was revealed in the subsequent nominations.

Four vice-presidents were required. The persons appointed were M. Martel, M. Vitet, M. Léon de Maleville, all belonging to the Right Centre, and M. Benoist d'Azy, a Legitimist. M. Léon de Maleville, the last elected, had 288 votes. The next candidate, M. de Vogué, a Legitimist, had 214 votes. The Right Centre had two questors, who passed with 458 and 430 votes; the Legitimists succeeded with great difficulty in getting M. Princeteau passed. He had only 222 votes at the first ballot; but the Republican candidate had only 147, and this number fell to 55 at the final ballot.

The six secretaries were Messieurs Bethmont, Paul de Rémusat, de Barante, Johnston, de Castellane, and de Meaux. Of these, only M. Bethmont was a Republican; so that there were but two Republicans in a bureau composed of four-

teen members. The strength of the Republican party is exactly represented by the number of votes given to M. Magnin for the post of questor, and to M. Charles Rolland for that of secretary. M. Magnin had 147 votes, M. Rolland, 145. The Republicans voted without any allies. The most liberal and intelligent members of the Right Centre, those who, a few months later, were to rally round the Republic, and form the Left Centre of the Assembly, were still hesitating. They voted for the Monarchist candidates, who entered the bureau with majorities of 300 and 400 votes.

The most urgent duty of the Assembly was to form a Provisional Government; first, because France must have a Government, and secondly, because a Negotiator, who could speak with authority, was indispensable. Afterwards the Assembly would have to discuss the peace proposals, and to fix the permanent locality of Parliament. Such was the order of the urgent business of the Assembly and of France at that moment.

The Assembly had no choice about placing the Government in the hands of M. Thiers; it had only to follow the lead of the country. Not only had he been elected in twenty-six different places, but he had obtained important

minorities in others, and the total number of votes given for him exceeded two millions. When he was returned for Paris in 1863, his election was regarded throughout Europe as an important event. He was obliged to allow himself to be chaired, and some one called out to him, "It will be a dialogue between the Emperor and you." In July, 1870, the Government, acting the braggart's part, but in reality beginning to tremble, entreated him to join the Council of Defence. He replied that he would only consent on the invitation of the whole Chamber; and the Chamber, like the Government, knew that in that hour of great danger he was indispensable. On the 4th September he was entreated to preside at the final sitting. The Provisional Government had recourse to him in its turn, and requested him to become the advocate of France with kings and peoples. He had never sought for popularity; he had braved it. All alike, friends and enemies, knew that he was our only statesman, and that in his name was our protection and moral force.

During the sitting of the 16th February it was proposed that he should be placed at the head of the Government. The proposition was signed by Messieurs Dufaure, Jules Grévy, Vitet, Léon de Maleville, Rivet, Mathieu de la Redorte, and

Barthélemy Saint-Hilare, and was voted on the 17th, upon the report of M. Victor Lefranc.

"The commission," says the Report, "does not require to lay before you the motives for the selection of the man to whom it requests you to delegate the Executive Power of the French Republic.

"The inspiration which led him, thirty years ago, to fortify Paris, that city which famine only has been able to reduce (*Sensation*); the foresight which made him oppose the war a few months ago, while it was yet possible to avert it, the noble self-devotion which led him to visit all the nations of Europe that, in their hearing, he might defend the rights of civilization together with the interests of France; and, finally, the homage of so many departments; all these things point him out to our choice. (*Cheers and applause.*)

"Let us strengthen him by our unanimity: it is the only means whereby we can add to the strength of his patriotism. (*Renewed applause.*)

"He will find worthy auxiliaries among those who have borne the burthen and the pain of the conflict, both in Paris and in the provinces. (*Approbation.*)

"Let all France be of one mind with this

Assembly; so shall she fulfil the duties imposed upon her by her past, her present, and her future." (*Loud and prolonged applause.*)

The proposition was in the following terms :—

"The National Assembly, entrusted with Sovereign Authority,

"Considering it important, before the institutions of France are settled, that the necessities of the Government and the conduct of the negotiations should be immediately provided for;

"Decrees :—

"M. Thiers is appointed Chief of the Executive of the French Republic. He will exercise his functions under the authority of the National Assembly, with the assistance of Ministers whom he shall select, and over whom he will preside."

There was no public ballot. The *Journal Officiel* reports the vote as follows :—

"The proposition was put to the vote, and adopted almost unanimously."

The second paragraph had been added by the Commission to the primary proposition. Its object was to place on record that the Chamber did not accept the Republican form otherwise than provisionally, and pending legislation. M. Louis Blanc called attention to this from the

tribune; adding to his own protest that of those members of the Republican party who regarded the Republican form as above all discussion and contest. He declared that France regarded the provision for a future revolution, made by the Monarchists, in the very act which constituted the Government, with uneasiness. No truth was ever more evident.

The majority in the Assembly was commencing its struggle with the majority in the country.

M. Thiers had set about forming his Cabinet prior to his being charged with the executive power, indeed ever since the result of the elections had made it evident that he must speedily find himself at the head of the Government. He resolved to take his ministers from the two great sections of the Assembly, the Left, and the Right Centre. M. Dufaure was naturally indicated as the Minister of Justice. The portfolio of Commerce was confided to M. Lambrecht, who had been a member of the Legislative Body from 1863 to 1869, had constantly voted with M. Thiers, and was remarkable for the extent of his information, the directness and precision of his intelligence, and also for elegance and clearness as a speaker. M. Thiers, between whom and M. Lambrecht an old and sincere friendship existed, used to say familiarly

of him that he was "wisest of the wise." M. de Larcy, a Liberal Legitimist, a member of the Chamber of Deputies under Louis Philippe, and a determined enemy of the empire, became Minister of Public Works. This non-political office was the only share in the composition of the Cabinet which fell to the Legitimist party. M. de Larcy, a lawyer, and formerly a magistrate under the Restoration, had been for a long time in the habit of taking part in political assemblies, and was not adapted to the office which he was appointed to fill. M. Lambrecht, an engineer in official employ,[1] would have been more suitably placed as Minister of Public Works; but M. Thiers was bent upon having a Minister of Commerce who shared his own opinions in the matter of Customs. The President retained General Le Flô at the Ministry of War, and gave the naval portfolio to Admiral Pothuan. General Le Flô voted afterwards with the Right, and Admiral Pothuan joined the Left Centre of the Assembly, but, at the time, their respective nominations to the Cabinet were not regarded as political either by M. Thiers, or by the Chamber. M. Thiers was careful to explain his selection of Admiral Pothuan in his speech of the 10th March, 1871. "The Naval Minister," he said, "might

[1] In the service known as *Ponts et Chaussées*.

remain at Bordeaux; nevertheless we wanted him in Paris because he is popular, and even renowned there, not only for good sense, but also for calm courage. We are glad to avail ourselves of the popularity he has won."

M. Thiers reserved only three out of nine portfolios for Republicans, but he rightly considered that in appointing them to the Ministries of Home and Foreign Affairs respectively he had placed them in the most important posts. M. Jules Favre had been Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Government of National Defence, and in September had made the journey to Ferrières, whose result was decisive division between the Imperial and the Republican policy, release of the Government from responsibility, and the demonstration of their true situation to France and Prussia respectively. M. Jules Favre had also negotiated and concluded the convention of the 28th January; it was natural that he should become the associate and fellow-labourer, or rather, as he afterwards said, the fellow-martyr of M. Thiers in the negotiations about to be opened. M. Jules Favre made his acceptance of office conditional upon the appointment of M. Ernest Picard, his intimate friend, to the Ministry of the Interior. During the early years of the Empire, when there were only five dis-

sentients in the Legislative Body, M. Jules Favre was the leader of that small but glorious band, and Messieurs Ollivier and Picard were his companions in arms. In later times M. Ollivier became a Minister, while M. Ernest Picard remained by the side of M. Jules Favre in the Republican Opposition. They entered the Government of National Defence together, and assumed its direction. M. Thiers, who appreciated the worth of M. Picard, accepted his services with eagerness. He begged M. Jules Simon to retain his office as Minister of Public Instruction. On the 19th February, M. Thiers announced to the National Assembly that he had formed his Cabinet of the gentlemen above mentioned.

The name of the Minister of Finance was missing from the list. "The choice is already made by the Council," said M. Thiers, "but the honourable member to whom the department of Finance will be entrusted has not yet reached Bordeaux, so that I do not consider myself at liberty to give publicity to his name."

For a short time M. Thiers had thought of M. Buffet for the Ministry of Finance. On returning to Paris he resolved to call upon M. Pouyer-Quertier, one of our chief manufacturers, and a powerful and original speaker on financial affairs in the Legislative Body, to fill the important post.

"He is a financier of the first class," wrote M. Thiers to M. Jules Simon, "fertile in resource, and bold to the last degree." The economic views of M. Pouyer-Quertier, which were shared by M. Lambrecht, but which M. Jules Simon strenuously opposed in the latter years of the Empire, also recommended him to M. Thiers. The economic question above all others was pressing upon the mind of the chief of the Executive, and with good reason. Subjects of disagreement were already but too numerous, in the Council as well as in the Assembly, and indeed throughout all France, this one must inevitably lead to fresh complications, and that speedily, since new taxes must inevitably, and soon, be levied. M. Thiers relied upon the moderation and the patriotism of his colleagues although he did not hope to convert them all to his economic views. He wrote to M. Jules Simon as follows :—

"I said to M. Pouyer-Quertier that he must confine himself to a moderate raising of the tariffs, a measure which is indispensable to our finances, for the customs only will be able to give us one hundred millions of francs, the chief resource of the future budget. I also told him that his nomination was subject to your acquiescence. As the Ministry must positively be completed,

especially in the department of Finance, which must find money, by the beginning of March, I beg you will immediately summon the Council and reply to me by telegraph. Do not lose a moment." The consent for which M. Thiers asked was telegraphed at once, but M. Jules Simon wrote to him on the same day :—

"M. de Larcy takes exception on the point of free trade; M. Dufaure also, but more formally. He has expressly charged me to write to you to that effect; and to add that he fears this nomination will produce a bad effect in England, where it may be interpreted as an abandonment of the principle of free trade. I need not tell you that I also take similar exception, and I have every reason to believe that Jules Favre thinks with me.

"I regret deeply that I am obliged to speak just now of anything except the mission which you are accomplishing so admirably, but the first condition of an honest ministry like ours is that the situation shall be perfectly clear on all points. It must be understood then that I abide by all the deplorable doctrines which, as you know, I hold, free trade, obligatory education, &c. That point being settled, rest assured that I will help you with all my might to conclude the peace, and to tranquillize the country."

On the 19th February, in announcing the formation of the Ministry (M. Pouyer-Quertier had not yet joined it), M. Thiers made the memorable speech in which he set forth what has since been called "the pact of Bordeaux." This was the programme of the Cabinet, and it was scrupulously adhered to by the Ministers and their illustrious chief, but the majority of the Chamber, although it was apparently adopted by them on that day, afterwards refused to regard it otherwise than as a precaution against a Republican Government. When M. Thiers wished only to adjourn, they wanted to condemn.

"You have left to me," he said, "the selection of my colleagues. I have chosen them from no motive of preference beyond the public esteem universally accorded to the character and the capacity of each of them; I have taken them not from one only of the parties into which we are divided, but from all; just as the country did when it gave you its votes, allowing persons of the most widely-different opinions to figure upon the self-same lists, because they are all united by patriotism, intelligence, and community of good intentions. (*Hear! hear!*)

"France, flung into a great war without a grave motive, and insufficiently prepared, has seen one half of her soil invaded, her army destroyed, her fine

organization broken up, her ancient and powerful unity impaired, her finances crippled, multitudes of her sons torn from their bread-winning toil to die on the field of battle, order rudely disturbed by the sudden uprising of anarchy, and the war, suspended for a few days only, after the enforced surrender of Paris, ready to break out again unless a Government, held in esteem by Europe, accepting power with courage, taking the responsibility of most painful negotiations upon itself, shall put an end to these frightful calamities.

"In the presence of such a state of things, is there, can there exist a division of policy? On the contrary, is there not one policy only, enforced, necessary, urgent;—the securing of the promptest possible cessation of the evils by which we are overwhelmed?

"Is there any one who would venture to deny that the first thing to be done and as soon as possible, is to bring the foreign occupation of the territory to an end by means of a peace, to be earnestly debated, and rejected if it be not honourable? (*Hear! hear! Applause from several benches.*)

"Will any one venture to tell us that a more pressing duty exists for us than to free our lands from the enemy who treads them under foot, and devours their produce; to recall our soldiers, our

officers, our generals, from their foreign prisons with them to reconstitute a disciplined and brave army; to re-establish order; to fill the places of unworthy officials, or of such as have resigned; to reform our dissolved General and Municipal Councils by election; (*Hear! hear!*) to reconstruct our disorganized administration, check ruinous expenditure, re-establish—if not our finance,—that we could not expect to do in a day—at least our credit, which is our only means of facing our pressing engagements; to send back our mobiles to their fields and their workshops; to reopen the intercepted highways, to rebuild the demolished bridges; to revive labour which is everywhere suspended, labour which alone can secure the means of existence to our workmen and our peasants? (*Hear! hear!*) Is it possible that any here present would enter upon a lengthy discussion of articles of constitution, while our prisoners are languishing in distant lands, and our starving populations are forced to relinquish their last morsel of bread to foreign soldiers? (*Prolonged sensation.*)

"No, no, gentlemen; the only policy possible or even conceivable at this moment is that of reorganization, of the revival of labour, of the restoration of credit. In these tasks every sensible, honest, and intelligent man, let him think as he

may about the Monarchy or the Republic, may worthily and usefully assist; and if he has laboured for those ends for only one year, or for six months, then he may retire unto the bosom of his country, with head erect and conscience at ease. (*Hear! hear!*)

"When we shall have rendered those pressing services which I have just enumerated to our country, when we shall have raised up bleeding France, now lying low, when we shall have healed her wounds and renovated her strength, then we shall restore her to her own guidance, and she, having recovered her liberty of spirit, standing firm once more, shall rule her life as she pleases." (*Loud applause.*)

M. Thiers concluded his speech with an eloquent appeal for concord. The building resounded for several minutes with the applause with which every member of all the parties greeted his brave and noble words. He repeated the same declarations, with equal precision and with similar success, at the last meeting of the Assembly at Bordeaux, on the 10th March. The question was the place in which the Assembly should sit. The Extreme Left wanted Paris, the Right demanded Fontainebleau, the Government designated Versailles. After he had discussed the question in a lofty tone, and with irresistible effect, M. Thiers

went on to speak of the part which the Assembly had now to act. "You are sovereign," said he to his colleagues. "Never was there an Assembly elected more freely, or with more extensive powers conferred upon it. You have the power, if you choose to use it, of making a Constitution; but you will be wise enough to forego the exercise of your power." These words met with some opposition from the benches on the Right, and he then dwelt upon the divisions in the Assembly, and their inevitable consequences, should such a moment be chosen for framing a Constitution. "France," said he, "needs all our efforts, she requires union among us, for her new birth. Let us adjourn our divisions, and working heartily at our most pressing business, under the Government *de facto*, leave the future an open question."

Dealing with the characteristics of the parties in the Assembly, M. Thiers dwelt on two only, as befitted a practical man, fully aware of the powerlessness of the Legitimists, and the worthlessness of the Bonapartists. "You are divided," he said, "into two great parties:—one, and this is perfectly legitimate, perfectly respectable,—believes that France can find definitive repose only under a constitutional monarchy; the other, as sincerely, believes that in the institu-

tions which you have conferred upon yourselves, in that great institution, Universal Suffrage, in the general direction of the movement of men's minds, in the disturbance which exists at the centres of Government all the world over, there is something which draws existing generations towards the Republic."

M. Thiers spoke of the opposed parties with equal respect, which was not only very politic on his part, but also quite sincere. "Let calumny cease among us," he said, "let us learn to do justice, and to respect each other's opinions." He made a brief allusion to the internal dissensions among the different parties. "There are Republicans who believe that the Republic, even when it is not in their hands, is still the Republic. There are others who admit the Republic only when it is in their hands." Recalling the errors into which the first Republic fell in the final years of its existence, and the long-continued exposure of them, while the excesses of the White Terror were scrupulously kept in the shade, knowing besides that a party cannot improvise capable administrators off-hand, and that to know how to use power it must be for some time in power; and also, perhaps, yielding in some measure to the influence of his old monarchical prejudices, M.

Thiers uttered the phrase "a Republic without Republicans," which might indeed define a system, but which, as he used it, was nothing more than an exhortation to wisdom and moderation. Those words were afterwards turned into a weapon in the hands of those enemies of the Republic who for a while governed it. "I do not want," he added, "to flatter any one—at my age I am not likely to begin to do what I have never done under any system, I have flattered neither king, nor people, nor party;—I profoundly honour those who have the good sense to recognize that the institution itself not being reassuring, it is necessary that the men should be so.

"What, then, is our duty?" said M. Thiers in conclusion. "What is the duty which I, whom you have overwhelmed with your confidence, am bound to fulfil? It is loyal dealing towards all the parties which divide France and which divide the Assembly. It is due to them all that we deceive none of them; that we do not so act as to prepare without your knowledge an exclusive solution, which would cause dismay to the other parties. (*Hear! hear!*)

"No, I swear in presence of the country, and if I might consider myself so important that I may allude to history, I would say that I

swear in presence of history, that I will not deceive any of you, that I will not prepare through the medium of constitutional questions any solution unknown to you, and which would be a sort of treason on my, on our, part. (*Loud applause*)

"Monarchists, Republicans, no! Neither one party nor the other shall be deceived. We have accepted only a single mission, but it is almost overwhelming. We will occupy ourselves solely with the reorganization of the country. We shall always ask for your support in that reorganization, because we know that if we step beyond this limited task we divide you, and ourselves.

"We will labour at this difficult work only. But I must be permitted to say to men who have given their whole lives to the Republic, be just to those members of this Assembly who do not think as you do.

"You have called me Chief of the Executive of the French Republic. In every act of the Government, the word Republic is repeatedly used. If we succeed in effecting reorganization it will be done under the Republican form and to its profit. (*Hear! hear! from several benches!*) You must not come and say to us, 'Do not sacrifice the Republic!' for I should reply, 'Do not ruin it yourselves!'

"The Republic is in your hands, it will be the reward of your own prudence and of nothing else. Every time that you lose your temper, every time that you raise inopportune questions, every time that you appear to be, let me say the confidants or the involuntary accomplices—certainly involuntary—of the party of disorder; say to yourself that by accepting this apparent complicity you deal the Republic the deadliest of blows. (*Sensation.*)

"When the country has been reorganized, we shall come here, if happily we ourselves have been able to reorganize it, if our strength have sufficed, if we have not lost your confidence by the way; then, in that case, we shall come as soon as we can, very happy, very proud of having contributed to that noble deed, and we shall say to you, 'You confided the country to us, bleeding, covered with wounds, scarce alive; we restore it to you somewhat revived, now is the moment to give it the form which it is definitely to wear.' And I give you the word of an honest man, on not one of the reserved questions shall any resolution have been taken; no solution shall have been effected by a breach of faith on our part."

The speech of M. Thiers was followed by long-continued and enthusiastic acclamations, and the

orator was surrounded, almost mobbed, by members of the Assembly who expressed their admiration of it, some of them with tears. It was not the orator whom they admired, whom they thanked, though he had never been greater; it was the statesman, the patriot, and—no one would then have thought the word too strong—the saviour.

This speech was delivered on the 10th March, and in it M. Thiers had almost announced the insurrection which actually did take place on the 18th. More than one among his hearers might afterwards have recalled those memorable words: "Every time that you appear to be the confidants or the accomplices of the party of disorder, you deal the Republic the deadliest of blows." How often, afterwards, the whole Assembly, the Left as well as the Right, ought to have bethought themselves of those other words, spoken with such solemn sadness: "There is too much calumny among us! Let us respect each other's opinions." France had so much need of peace! There was such a great work to be done in common!

It was not, however, easy to bring about internal peace in the country. Civil war was on the point of breaking out in Paris. Strife, less fierce indeed, but which, for the misfortune of

France, was destined to last for years, already existed in the National Assembly. Twice only during the sittings at Bordeaux did the various parties seem to be fused together in a common purpose; first on the nomination of M. Thiers as Chief of the Executive, and secondly, on the proclamation of the abolition of the Empire. The latter solemn decision was brought about by an incident of the sitting on the 1st March.

M. Bamberger, the deputy from Metz, had ascended the tribune, to protest against the treaty of peace, "or rather," said he, "the treaty of shame." "One man only ought to have signed it," continued M. Bamberger, "Napoleon the Third." Then M. Gallioni was heard to exclaim, "Napoleon the Third would never have signed a shameful treaty!" In a moment there arose the wildest confusion. All the members of the Assembly stood up, and all spoke, or rather shouted simultaneously. The public in the galleries, as indignant as the deputies, shouted with them. M. Conti made his way towards the tribune amid cries of "Let him speak! Let him explain himself! Let him justify the Emperor! Let him dare to defend him who has betrayed and ruined France!"

"I stand here," said M. Conti, "to defend, with

earnest conviction a glorious past, a revered sovereign, whom France has applauded by four plebiscites, to whom those who now revile me have, like me, sworn allegiance, to whom our country owes fifteen years of repose and prosperity. If my protest be stifled here, I hope, I am sure, that it will resound throughout the whole of France."

"A glorious past!" cried M. Vitet, "say a shameful past. Plebiscites imposed by craft and violence! Did not your Emperor take the oath to the Republic? You call years of oppression and tyranny years of peace. Peace! You have gone to war against the will of France four times over! When M. Thiers demanded the preservation of peace, you drove him from the tribune! You brought about the war by lies, and went into it like madmen, without allies, without resources, without generals! You are responsible for the blood of our soldiers, sacrificed by your criminal folly! responsible for our humiliation, our ruin, and the dismemberment of France!" M. Galloni, M. Gavini, and M. Haentjens supported M. Conti, but they only were with him. M. Bamberger pushed his way to the tribune, and took his place beside M. Conti. M. Victor Hugo joined the two, and also endeavoured to speak. The President could not get a hearing. A member called out

loudly: "The deposition of the Empire must be proclaimed!" Then arose the cry, "Deposition! Deposition!" (*La déchéance! La déchéance!*) from every part of the Assembly: it rolled like thunder through the galleries, the corridors, and the staircases, until it reached and was echoed by the dense crowd which thronged the Place de Tourny and the adjacent streets, and by the troops under arms in the vicinity of the Theatre. The President suspended the sitting, which was resumed half an hour later, and then M. Grévy read the text of an order of the day which had been laid upon his desk:—

"The National Assembly closes the incident, and under the grievous circumstances in which the country is placed, in presence of unexpected protests and exceptions, confirms the deposition of Napoleon the Third and of his dynasty, which has been already proclaimed by universal suffrage, and declares him responsible for the ruin, the invasion, and the humiliation of France."

The reading of this order of the day was followed by prolonged acclamations. All the members of the Assembly rose to their feet, applauding, and shouting "bravo!" A great number of Republicans were among the signatories, but every one wanted to sign, all parties were represented. The names of Messieurs Lambert de Sainte-Croix,

de Brette-Thurin, Wallon, Victor de Laprade, Baragnon, and de Marmier, were side by side with those of Messieurs Target, Paul Bethmont, and Charles Rolland. Three times the cheering was renewed. M. Conti again demanded permission to speak, in the midst of general indignation. "Give him leave," said M. Thiers; "Monsieur le Président, give him leave to speak! Sustain his demand!" The President, finding it impossible to procure silence, M. Thiers made up his mind, ascended the tribune, and said,—

"Gentlemen, I have proposed a policy of conciliation and of peace, and I hoped that everybody would understand our reserve and silence with respect to the past. When, however, that past uplifts itself again before the country, when it seems to mock our misfortunes, which it has caused, not by its faults only, but also by its crimes, we are bound to answer on the instant, and make known the truth. Do you know, gentlemen, what those princes whom you represent are saying in Europe? They are saying that it is not they who are guilty of the war, they are saying that we are guilty, that France is guilty of it! Well then, I give them the lie in the face of Europe. No, France did not want war; it was you, you who now protest, who would have it! You have disowned the truth, but it has risen to confront you to-day, and it seems like a

judgment from heaven that here, in this place, you should be obliged to undergo the sentence of the nation which will be that of posterity."

After these terrible words, the order of the day was put to the vote. "The Assembly confirms the deposition of Napoleon the Third and his dynasty, already pronounced by universal suffrage, and declares him responsible for the ruin, the invasion, and the dismemberment of France." A few members stood up at the counter-proof. "I affirm," said M. Cochery, "that five members only have stood up at the counter-proof." "There are six," said M. Wilson in his turn, "not one more! I require that the fact be stated in the *Moniteur*."

After such a sitting as this, and considering the effect which it produced on the country, it might have been believed that Bonapartism was finally and irrevocably vanquished. The Republicans had not exhibited greater indignation than the Constitutionalists and the Legitimists. M. Vitet, usually so circumspect, and M. de Franclieu, had remained during the entire scene at the foot of the tribune, in the midst of the excited throng, and were with difficulty restrained by their friends. Nevertheless, this party, condemned, stigmatized, dishonoured by a solemn vote, in which all the other parties without exception had taken a part,

reduced to six members in the Assembly, and with no organs except M. Conti (who died shortly afterwards), M. Gavini, and M. Galloni d'Istria, was destined to become in time the most influential in that same Assembly. It obtained toleration from the Monarchists, in the first place, as a useful auxiliary in their incessant struggle against the Republic and Republicans: then it became a necessary make-weight, securing the victory to the side to which it leaned, after this it profited by the senseless political campaigns of the Orleanists and the Legitimists, who seemed to put themselves forward to meet defeat, and finally it became the director-in-chief of the manœuvres of the Right, and their eventual beneficiary.

In order to account for this extraordinary luck, we must thoroughly understand that its point of departure, at Bordeaux itself, was the hatred of the Republic and Republicans entertained by all the Monarchists. The explosion of wrath against the imperial régime which took place on the 1st March is easily explicable by the revival of the recollection of our recent misfortunes, and the discussion of the preliminaries of peace on the same day. The Bonapartists, however, were well aware that hatred of the Republic was an older and a deeper sentiment, and one which would last

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longer in the breasts of the majority of the Monarchists. Republicans were constantly represented as enemies of religion and property. The identification of them with atheists and socialists was merely a continuation of a system of calumny which dates back to the earliest contests between the Royalists and the Revolution in 1789. The Bonapartists added to these charges against the Republicans that they had caused our disasters by urging on the war, disorganizing the army, bringing about a revolution in presence of the enemy, prolonging resistance, and refusing to summon the Assembly. All these imputations were false.

The Republicans had not urged on the war; on the contrary they had resisted to the utmost the declaration of war which was made by the leaders of the Bonapartist party, in spite of the Republicans and of all France. The Republicans had not disorganized the army; they had merely insisted together with the whole of the Legislative body upon a reduction of 10,000 men on the contingent proposed by M. Emile Ollivier. Neither had they brought about a revolution in presence of the enemy; but they had courageously and patriotically assumed power when the Empire fell, crushed under the weight of its own sins and our misfortunes, and unable to command the

obedience of either soldiers or officials. That the Republicans had not voluntarily prolonged resistance to the enemy after the 4th September was amply proved by the interview at Ferrières. They were, indeed, forced in their own despite to continue the war, and they urged it on vigorously, according to the laws of honour, until the moment at which further resistance had become impossible. They had not refused to summon a National Assembly, but they had not thought it possible to do so without an armistice, and while one half of France was invaded. These contradictory assertions, some of which were grossly absurd, were made by the Bonapartists in all their newspapers, with the object of distracting public attention from the crimes of the Empire.

Although the country at large treated the calumnies of the Bonapartists with the contempt they deserved, it was otherwise in the Assembly, where the most timid of conservatives and the most fanatical of clericals were among the members. That it was their set purpose to get rid of the Republic and make war on Republicans became especially evident when the question of fixing the seat of Government outside of Paris came on for discussion. To the Right, at that moment, Paris meant Republic.

It must be borne in mind that the question was whether not the Assembly only, but the Chief of the State, the Ministers and the entire administration should not be located outside of Paris, and even, if the more extreme had been listened to, at a great distance from the capital. The present aspect of the same question is entirely changed. The President of the Republic and all the Ministers reside in Paris. The public offices have never been transferred. A few officials are sent to Versailles, during the session of the Assembly, that the law may appear to be observed. In fact the resolutions adopted at Bordeaux, and confirmed by constitutional law are obsolete, with the sole exception that the Assembly and the Senate meet at Versailles instead of meeting at the Palais Bourbon, and the Luxembourg. This is a great inconvenience to the members of the two Assemblies, who lose much time every day, attend committees irregularly, and have few opportunities of meeting and coming to an understanding with one another. It is a still greater inconvenience to the Ministers who are at a distance from their bureaus, and consequently from the centres of information and business during the greater part of the day. What does Paris lose by all this? Nothing. When the discussion took place at Bordeaux, on the 10th March, 1871, a week before

the outbreak of the Commune, the case was entirely different.

M. Thiers proposed Versailles. He would have preferred Paris, for he loved the capital deeply and truly, and would not willingly have consented to inflict a slight upon it. He was fully aware that the tide of business flowed there, that the Government ought not to be far from the great financial centre; that the danger, if danger there were, from the crowded state of the city, and the floating population, rendered the presence of the Government all the more necessary. "A Prefect at Paris?" said he. "If you know one who would be capable of governing and restraining it, show him to me. I shall be delighted. He shall be put at the head of the Government; and rid me of a very heavy burden." M. Thiers felt the necessity of restoring its former splendour to the great city which is not only the political, but also the literary, scientific, industrial, and financial capital of the country. To make little of Paris is to make little of France, and to lessen its wealth. Foreigners come to see Paris rather than France. To wealthy and enlightened Europe Paris is France, and the strength and splendour of France is estimated by the strength and splendour of Paris. All the rest of the world takes its tastes, its fashions, and its customs from Paris,

submits to its judgment, comes thither as to the universal meeting-place, the centre of civilization. Our history itself would be less comprehensible if Paris were no longer the capital. One of the most admirable speeches ever made by M. Thiers was his speech of the 10th March, and all its conclusions were in favour of Paris. Nevertheless he said, several times over, "I do not propose Paris to you." Why? He did not give his reason.

The growing excitement of which he had just been a witness, and which, a week later, culminated in insurrection, was the explanation. He could not propose Paris, and, had he done so, it is not unlikely that, almost all-powerful as his influence was, the proposal would have been rejected. He was restrained by that consideration also. He did propose that the seat of the Assembly should be at the gates of the city, with the certainty that when things should have calmed down, the Government, if not the Assembly, would remove to Paris. Time has proved that he was right. The Monarchical majority, who had come to Versailles against their will, have made strenuous efforts to keep the Government there. They thought nothing of spending millions for this purpose. They would have erected all the necessary buildings, without reflecting that a more colossal Paris would probably be the sole

result, for, after all, it is only half an hour from the Palais Bourbon to the Château de Versailles. They even inserted an Article in the Constitution which very nearly threw everything into confusion, and which, though put in practice by the two Chambers because they can obey it at the cost of some inconvenience, is openly violated by the President of the Republic, because it would be at once improper and impossible for him to conform to it. How was it that the Monarchists, who foresaw these consequences, and who wanted Fontainebleau in order to avoid them, agreed to Versailles? Several of the least clear-sighted among them said, "It is not Paris." Others, conscious of the enormity of their demands, had not sufficient courage to persist. They were strong in the Assembly, but very weak in the country, and they knew it. They did not even venture to propose Bourges, their ideal, openly. They held to Fontainebleau, which did not mean another capital, but no capital at all; a locality in which the Government would be deprived of the means of action, but an insurrection would not. Fontainebleau was, in plain words, a folly. Bourges would have been an outrage; Versailles was an expedient. Versailles carried the day by a large majority.

The true sentiments of the Monarchists came out on several occasions during the debate. M.

Louis Blanc was the first speaker. "Why," said he, "should we follow up one provisional installation by another? Why should we be condemned to offer to all Europe the spectacle of a wandering Assembly, which goes begging for a refuge in the very country which it represents? Is it because we are afraid of Paris?"

A Member.—"Yes."

The Assembly instantly recognized the imprudence of this utterance, and cries of "No, No!" arose on all sides. The rectification might be sound policy, but the word had been uttered. A little later in his speech M. Louis Blanc put this question:—

"Is there not a party in the Assembly which, in order to disarm what it calls the Revolution, would remove the seat of Government from Paris for ever?"

A Voice on the Right.—"Yes."

M. Louis Blanc.—"You say, 'Yes.' Oh, my fellow-citizens, reflect on this, and do not, I entreat of you, touch the national unity. To do so would be to complete by the hands of Frenchmen that dismemberment of our beloved France that has been commenced by the hands of the enemy, and, perhaps, to kindle from the ashes of the horrible foreign war that is hardly yet over, a civil war more horrible still. (*Great applause from several benches.*)

"The other day one of my colleagues said in my presence,—

"'Hitherto revolution has marched from Paris on the provinces. It is time that order should march from the provinces on Paris.'" (*Hear! hear! on the Right.*)

M. Alfred Giraud replied to M. Louis Blanc. "Many representatives have, like myself, received, not an imperative mandate—that we would not have accepted—but an imperious one. This mandate is so to act that the Assembly shall not deliberate either under the bullets of the Prussians or the paving stones of rioters. Afraid! The word 'afraid' has been uttered, and I accept the challenge. Yes, I am afraid! Not for myself. I am afraid for the National Assembly. I am afraid for my country. France has endured misfortune enough to earn our compassion for her, grand, dear, and mournful wreck as she is!"

M. de Belcastel expressed himself with complete frankness.

"What is," said he, "the mind of the great majority in France on this vital point? I believe it to be this:—

"France knows that ten times in eighty years Paris has sent her ready-made governments by telegraph. (*Assent on the Right.*)

"She knows that insurrections, even when they

are put down, are ugly dates. She knows that Paris is the head-quarters of organized revolt (*Assent on the Right*), the capital of the revolutionary idea, though only temporarily so, I hope and believe. However, while this violent state of crisis, of which she is the judge, lasts, France will not, because she ought not, deliver up her fortunes, and her last remaining citadel, your Assembly, gentlemen, to the chances of a contest and to the pressure of that idea."

M. Fresneau, although he pronounced a glowing eulogium upon Paris, spoke as follows:—

"The mere fact of these deliberations seems to prove that, while all our industries are disorganized, there is still one which lasts and flourishes, the industry of those worthies who make a trade of overturning governments, as highwaymen might stop a coach at the corner of a wood, and lay hold of the sovereignty of thirty millions of men in two hours. In this situation, and since we have been nominated here, I admit that something like fear has taken hold of my mind."

M. de Boisboissel also exclaimed,—

"If you want us to go to Paris, at least disarm the faubourgs."

In every speech this fear of Paris, or, as the speakers put it, of the revolutionary idea, is evident. Paris was not to be the capital of the Republic,

therefore it was that they would none of Paris. No one said what would have been true, that Paris was, just then, in a state of violent excitement, easy to explain, but undeniably threatening; and that if there were indeed some danger for the Assembly it arose from present circumstances, and would disappear with them.

All this was in M. Thiers' mind. He was satisfied with a provisional sojourn outside of Paris, but at the gates of the city, at Saint Cloud or Versailles. He would have preferred Saint Cloud, had there been suitable accommodation, but the château was destroyed, and the village in ruins. Even though fearing an insurrection he would have accepted Paris, had he not despaired of the vote of the Assembly. He did not go so far as M. Louis Blanc, who believed that the sojourn of the Assembly at Versailles would be one of the chief causes of the insurrection, nor did he think that the presence of the Assembly in Paris would prevent it. And yet, such a proof of confidence in the capital at such a moment might have allayed the tumult of the public mind. The Government, supported by the Assembly, present like itself at the post of danger, would have gained in strength. If the Assembly had been Republican, there would not have been no hesitation. In any case, an ad-

journment for a short time might be explained by the circumstances, but a set purpose not to re-enter Paris could only be explained by a set purpose to overthrow the Republic.

No doubt the Monarchists were afraid, but their fear arose from their own intentions. It would never have been easy for an Assembly sitting in Paris to announce the substitution of Monarchy for the Republic. Napoleon himself, when he contemplated the deeds of the 18th *Brumaire*, transferred the Council of the Ancients to Saint Cloud, with the connivance of his brother. The Council had a constitutional right to fix the place of its abode. It remains to be seen whether, from the point of view of the timid, such a right is not more satisfactory than an article of the Constitution by which a sojourn at Versailles is rendered obligatory. Prior to the Constitution of the 18th February, 1875, an Assembly always had power to remove itself from Paris. In June, 1848, when the insurrection seemed for a while on the point of triumphing, a blank order was given to the President, M. Senard, empowering him to convene his colleagues in any city in France which he might select. During M. Jules Simon's mission to Bordeaux, he had a similar blank order from the Government of National Defence.

The animated discussion that ended by making Versailles the seat of Government, gave utterance not to the resentment of the provinces but to that of the Legitimist and Clerical parties. The large towns, and indeed all towns in general, have the Parisian, because they have the Republican spirit; the provincial spirit, which is losing ground day by day, lingers in small towns where there is but little manufacture, and in country places in which curés and country gentlemen still maintain their influence. The Prussians had their own interests to serve by spreading these discussions between Parisians and rurals. The following article appeared on Monday, the 24th October, 1870, in the *Nouvelliste de Versailles*, the official journal of the German army :—

"There are two nations in France, and between them a distinction should always be made. They are the Parisians, and the French properly so called. Since the great centralization, the work of Richelieu and Mazarin, the Parisians have always usurped dominion over true Frenchmen of the provinces. The Parisians have decided on peace and war, monarchy and the Republic, liberty and despotism; in short, as they have invariably governed in fact, they have treated the inhabitants of the country as helots. The administration has always had its centre in Paris,

and prefects were, so to speak, enforced upon the provinces; not one of those functionaries could be nominated, without having gone through a previous probation in Paris, so that he should be a Parisian by adoption, in default of birth.

"Thus it is not in reality against provincial France that Germany is in arms at this moment. The Departments, having up to the present time submitted almost involuntarily to the yoke or the domination of the Parisians, are now, as a matter of course, involved in the consequences of a war to which Paris, and the Government chosen by Paris, have treated them without their assent. Let provincial France emancipate herself from a pupillage which has no longer anything to justify it; let the departments show the domineering capital that henceforth they will not be exploited by it, to the detriment of their best interests."

The *Nouvelliste de Versailles* hardly stops short of presenting the Prussians in the character of liberators of the French provinces from their Parisian oppressors. Our clever enemies understand European opinion too well not to know that to abase Paris was to abase France.

On the 10th March the Assembly decided that its final sitting should be held at Bordeaux on the next day; and that they should meet again at Versailles on the 27th. M. Thiers had proposed

the 16th, which would have been better, but he did not insist.

The Assembly had sat seventeen times, during its sojourn at Bordeaux, including its preliminary meeting. It had verified the election, formed the provisional Government, proclaimed the deposition of Napoleon the Third and his dynasty, voted the law on bills of exchange, appointed fifteen commissions to report on the political, financial, industrial, and military situation of France, decided on Versailles as the provisional residence of the Assembly and the Government; and, finally, ratified the preliminaries of peace. After all this work, the Assembly took a week's holiday. Many of its members, having come direct to Bordeaux from the army or from the German prisons, required to devote a few days to their families and their business. The week destined to needful repose ended on a sinister date, 18th March. But before we enter upon the history of the Commune, we must place before our readers the details of the negotiation and the ratification of the preliminaries of peace.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.

DURING the war, two opposite current of opinions had been formed in France, both equally violent; one for war *à outrance*, for extermination or victory, the other as strongly for peace, even at the cost of the severest sacrifices. The Government of Defence, the object of contradictory accusations on all points, has been execrated by the one party for having desired peace, and condemned by the other, for having, as they say, retarded that end, by delaying the summoning of an Assembly. Certain it is that the majority of the Delegates to Tours and Bordeaux were for war *à outrance*, and that the Government at Paris was consistently for peace. This difference of opinion came out strongly towards the end: it had been perceptible from the beginning, but had not produced disagreement in action, because the Prussians were manifestly bent on abusing their

victory. Paris was as incapable of accepting a disgraceful peace, as Bordeaux would have been of refusing peace with honour. The efforts made at Ferrieres by M. Jules Favre, and at Versailles by M. Thiers, to obtain an armistice, having failed, the Government of Paris resolved to wait for the assistance that Bordeaux continued to promise, and to hold out until famine should put an end to the siege! To summon an Assembly without an armistice, when one third of France was invaded, and to put the guidance of armies or the negotiations for peace into the hands of a body of men thus irregularly called together, perhaps unknown to each other, and necessarily disturbed by the gravity of events and their own immense responsibility, appeared to all to be a deepening of our material and moral disorganization, almost equivalent to a surrender at discretion. On the 14th January an intimate friend of M. Thiers, knowing the siege was coming to an end because famine was imminent, wrote a private letter, asking him if it would not be possible, considering the position of the departments, to summon an Assembly immediately, reserving the seats of those deputies whom Paris should nominate after the siege was raised. "Thus only," said he, "shall we have a negotiator of peace, who will not, at the same time, have to

treat for the surrender of the citadel. On the day when General Trochu goes to Versailles—and that day is not far off, for we are exhausted—Bismarck will ask him for France." The battle of Buzenval took place, and with it came the end.

It should be borne in mind that, throughout the entire duration of the siege, the Government could take no steps towards peace, except in secret. After the 31st October they ceased to take any. The population wished for war, and still hoped for victory. Every man had enrolled himself in the National Guard, and enlistments in the regiments were already more than sufficiently numerous. These improvised soldiers asked no better than to be immediately drilled, and sent to the advanced posts, and out in sorties. They were full of the idea that the National Guard would beat the Prussian army. Their only fear was lest the Government should parley with the besiegers. When M. Jules Favre went to Ferrières he concealed his departure from the people, and also from several members of the Government. When his report was published a few days afterwards, it was received with general applause, not so much because it exhibited the admirable courage of the negotiator, although that was fully recognized, as because it furnished fresh causes of

complaint against the Prussians, and new motives for a continued resistance. The fatal events of the 31st of October took place to the cry of "No Armistice!" It was in fact the rising of that day which rendered the armistice impossible; but that was its only success. The same ringleaders brought about the scenes of the 22nd January for the same motives. On the 31st of October at least hope was still left; there were provisions in the city, and succour had been promised. It was a crime to select that date for an explosion of hatred towards the bourgeoisie, and it was madness to plan the substitution of M. Gustave Flourens for General Trochu. But when the rising of the 22nd January took place, we had no bread left, we had no succour to hope for, we could no longer deceive ourselves, after the experience of Buzenval, as to military resources; nevertheless the Government were seriously threatened. Once more M. Jules Favre was obliged to hide himself like a thief in order to accomplish the most painful task that could be imposed upon a patriot. The populace howled with rage at the slightest rumour of a negotiation, and yet they were all threatened with speedy death by hunger! "No, no!" they cried; there was plenty of provisions, but they were hidden so that the people might be starved into a surrender! An officer wrote in a

newspaper, "You have provisions for six months!" True, they had been beaten at Buzenval, but that was the fault of the generals. The sortie had not been genuinely "torrential!" The revolutionary newspapers declared every morning that when an entire people moves it is irresistible. Six weeks later, at Bordeaux, when M. Thiers brought down the preliminaries of peace to the sitting of the 10th of March, he had to repeat over and over again to the bellicose members who would not listen to them, "But the means! the means!" "The means," answered intelligent, well-informed men (see official report), "the means! You shall be taught it if you do not know it already. A *levée en masse!* Let the 750 deputies place themselves at the head of the nation in arms, and we shall utterly destroy the enemy." This was said on the 10th of March by members of the Assembly, after more than a month's reflection, and with the condition of our troops and their equipments under their eyes. Was it surprising that in Paris, when the blow fell that shook the reason of the strongest, when it became evident that the Government was making terms, a cry should have rung through the great city, decimated by pestilence and cannon, "We are betrayed!"

This cry found its echo in the provinces. It is one of the grossest instances of injustice on record.

It was allowed that the population had immortalized themselves; but many added that the Government had betrayed France by capitulating. The most moderate accused them of incapacity and weakness. There was great astonishment at the fall of Paris, the really astonishing thing was that it had not occurred three months earlier. This incapable Government had put the fortifications into a state of defence, raised an army which, improvised though it was, and necessarily lacking the steadiness of veteran troops, performed garrison duty perfectly, and displayed both dash and courage when under the enemy's fire; eked out the provisions beyond all hope; made head against two revolts; had not spilt one drop of blood, ordered one arrest, or committed one single act of vengeance after the revolution of the 4th September, and, for the space of five months, had kept order in Paris. The capital had neither surrendered nor been taken; it had been starved out. The Government had so prolonged the resistance, that no time was left for negotiation. All the public stores were empty, the roads were blocked up, and the enemy knew it! The delay of a day or two might give rise to one of the most frightful famines on record. The conditions of the armistice were less hard than might have been feared under such circumstances, and it

is paltering with the truth to deny the merit of those conditions to M. Jules Favre.

It would not be less unjust to deny that the Government did good service to France, by causing the elections to take place with perfect freedom, and such promptitude, that the Assembly was able to hold its first sitting fourteen days after the date of the decree of convocation. Once called together, the principal mission of this Assembly—some said, its sole mission—was to deliberate upon peace or war. It had only twelve days in which to decide upon a course of action; the armistice expired on the 22nd of February.

Peace had its adversaries in the Assembly. The number of them 107, is known. Doubtless, there were sincere men among them who, believing that France could still fight with some chance of success, looked upon the treaty of peace as cowardice and treason. There were also deputies from Alsace and Lorraine, who could not bring themselves to understand the truth, or perhaps could not admit to themselves that they did understand it. M. Thiers used a terrible phrase in speaking of a third class of peace partisans as "those who came to court a false popularity in the tribune at the risk of destroying their country." France could certainly fight still, but she could no longer conquer. We had been beaten, one might say

crushed, in the war which had just ended; how could we rationally hope for victory in a renewed struggle when we had lost thirty-one departments, Strasburg, Metz, Paris, some of our generals, and 420,000 men now prisoners in Germany, without reckoning those dead on the field of battle? The war party reasoned that 200,000 men still remained to us. Of what troops? and with what officers? According to them, we still had plenty of war material. Who would venture to compare what was left in our arsenals, and in our camps, with the immense resources of Germany, and the 500,000 disciplined men, used to war and well commanded, whom she could immediately array against us? A *levée en masse* was talked of; but a multitude is not an army. Men who can neither march, nor fire, who cannot stand fire, nor endure fatigue and privation, are a weakness, not a force. The *levée en masse* took place; the experiment was complete! With admirable vigour, M. Gambetta had drawn from the nation all it would and could give. The Revolution, it was said, had subdued the world by the *levée en masse*. The Revolution began with victories, because it had at its disposal the veteran French army, disciplined and trained to war, and commanded by Dumouriez. When it sent raw recruits, commanded by second-hand generals,

against Europe, it underwent a series of reverses which brought the country within a hair's-breadth of ruin. And yet the science of war was far from the perfection to which the genius of Napoleon brought it some years after. In these days, railways, and the transformation in weapons, give power, against which mere superiority of numbers can do nothing, to a well-commanded army, well supplied with war material. At the beginning of February, 1871, the Germans had the superiority over us in numbers, in generalship, in supplies of war material, and in money. They had also the moral force lent by six months of unheard-of success. A prolonged war would indeed have been terrible for them; but for us, fatal.

By treating for peace, France might be sure of rising again, one day, as Prussia itself had arisen, sixty years after Jena; by continuing the war, she would condemn herself to the fate of Poland. Was there any hope that Europe would intervene to save us? Had Europe interfered after the 4th of September? During the course of the negotiations, it was easy to measure the extent of the help in store for us from European diplomacy. Every one pitied us, and every one let us be butchered. In Russia, the people were for us; the Czar was for his uncle the Emperor of Germany. He recommended moderation to the conqueror;

but he informed Austria, whose sympathies we had gained, that if she ranged herself on the side of France, he would take the side of Prussia. Italy, whom so many reasons should have attached to us, was already afraid of the strength of the clerical party in the Assembly, and conceived that if this party, doubly blind, should attain power, our armies would be placed at the disposal of the Pope. Spain, sympathizing indeed, but a prey to internal divisions, was powerless to help us. England, as impolitic as the French Government after Sadowa, gave us nothing but moral support, and that at the close of the negotiations, when it could avail only to irritate Count Bismarck, without serving us.

In our position patriotism counselled, nay, commanded us to submit to peace. A dishonourable peace, a shameful peace was talked of; the resistance of Paris, and the glorious struggle of the provinces were a sufficient answer; honour was more than life. Doubtless, if we had been obliged to sacrifice the future of France in order to obtain peace, it would have been better to die fighting. If, however, by accepting all these calamities for the present generation, we might safely count upon the future, true honour consisted in submitting to a disaster which had been organized by the Empire with its own

hands. The one absorbing anxiety of thinking men, of true patriots, was this: to secure a to-morrow!

What would Prussia demand? She would claim an enormous war-indemnity, perhaps a reduction of our effective force and our fortresses, certainly a cession of territory. We could not deceive ourselves upon the last point. Even before the war, it was known that Prussia was threatening Alsace and Lorraine. At the Tuileries the menace was ridiculed. When General Ducrot, who commanded at Strasburg, warned the Imperial Government of the designs which were entertained at Berlin, and the preparation for a campaign of invasion, they laughed at the warning! Germany avowed her pretensions openly after our earliest disasters. Europe was silent; a circumstance to be noted. The day after Sedan, Count Bismarck said to General de Wimpffen, who had taken the command at the last moment, "We have had enough of this. France must be chastised for her pride, and her aggressive and ambitious temper. We intend at last to make sure of our children's safety, and, for that, we must have a glacis between France and us; we must have land, fortresses and frontiers which will place us, for ever, beyond all risk of attack on her part."

A few days later, the interview at Ferrières took

place. During the conversation between Count Bismarck and M. Jules Favre, the Chancellor said, "You declared war against us without a cause, and with the sole intention of taking a portion of our territory. Germany, which did not seek this opportunity, has made use of it for her own security, which can only be guaranteed by a cession of territory. Strasburg is a perpetual threat to us. It is the key of the house, and we want to have it."

M. Jules Favre replied, "Then, that means Alsace and Lorraine?"

The Count answered, "I have not spoken of Lorraine. But as for Alsace, I speak point blank. We look upon it as absolutely necessary for our defence."

At another point in this same interview Count Bismarck did speak of Lorraine. He expressly states this in a letter written by him at Ferrières, on the 24th of September, to rectify certain assertions contained in M. Jules Favre's report, and which was published in German in the "North German Correspondent."

"I expressly declared to M. Jules Favre," writes the Count, "that I refused to enter upon the subject of the new frontier demanded by us, until the principle of a cession of territory had been openly recognized by France. As a consequence

of this declaration, the formation of a new department of the Moselle, containing the districts of Strasburg, Château-Salins, Sarraguemines, Metz, and Thionville, was mentioned by me, as an arrangement suitable to our intentions. . . ."

M. Jules Favre, in his turn, rectifies Count Bismarck's rectifications, in a circular addressed to the representatives of France in foreign lands, recapitulating this important part of the conference thus :—

"I have allowed that upon this subject the Chancellor of the Confederation of the North had, at first, met me with a sort of put-off, drawn from my positive declaration that I would not consent to any cession of territory; but my interlocutor cannot have forgotten that, upon my insisting, he explained himself categorically, and mentioned, in case the principle of the cession of territory should be admitted, those conditions which I have enumerated in my report, i. e. the relinquishment by France of Strasburg, with the whole of Alsace, Metz, and part of Lorraine."

Germany's intentions were so well known to every one in France, that M. Michel Chevalier spoke of them, in a letter to Mr. Gladstone on the 12th of September, thus: "The conquest of Alsace and Lorraine by Prussia is simply a whim. Nancy is as French as Paris, and the

two chief towns of Alsace, Strasburg and Mulhouse, are nearly as much so. Germany has no interest in incorporating Alsace and Lorraine with herself; they are outside of her topography and her hydrography."

Moreover, a striking and significant fact was to be remarked prior to the conclusion of peace. When the Germans invaded a district which they wanted to keep, they established German institutions there, at once; when, on the contrary, their occupation was only provisional, they appointed an administrator, who did not disturb the French institutions. The alarm of the population of Lorraine was no less vehement than that of Alsace. The fears of both were made known, at Bordeaux, by a declaration which M. Keller undertook to lay before the Assembly in the session of the 17th February, a few hours before the vote was taken that entrusted the Government of France to M. Thiers. It was signed by all the Deputies from Lower Rhine, Upper Rhine, and the departments of the Moselle and the Meurthe, to the number of thirty-five. "Alsace and Lorraine refuse to be alienated. With one voice, the citizens at their firesides, the soldiers under arms, the former by voting, the latter by fighting, proclaim to Germany and to the world at large, the immutable will of Alsace and Lorraine to

remain French. France can neither consent to nor sign the cession of Lorraine and Alsace, without perilling the continuity of her national existence, and dealing a death-blow to her unity with her own hands."

The Assembly heard this document read with keen emotion. Great things were to be done that day, the Assembly had to constitute the Government. It was suggested that the consideration of M. Keller's proposition should be deferred until the following day, but M. Thiers insisted upon its being discussed at once.

"The Assembly ought to understand," he said, "that, in so grave a matter, we must act like thoughtful men.

"Let us not be carried away by empty words; we must know what we mean to put behind our words.

"One thing alone is worthy of you, worthy of France, worthy of true patriotism; it is that you declare yourselves at once, so that your will may be made known. To put this off to to-morrow would be puerile. Be assured of this, you cannot screen yourselves behind any Government which you may institute. Have the courage of your opinion; either war, or peace.

"I promise you, if I can influence your fate, to devote, as others do, my energies to the service

of our country so long as I can be useful to her; but I could not—I tell you this at once—accept a mission that, as an honourable man and a good citizen, I should be unable to carry out."

An hour after, M. Beulé, who had been appointed reporter during the interruption of the sitting, moved the following resolution, which was carried by a vast majority:—

"The National Assembly, having received the declaration of M. Keller and his colleagues with the greatest sympathy, refers it to the wisdom and patriotism of the negotiators."

Thus the negotiators were given full powers. The nomination of M. Thiers as Chief of the Executive took place immediately afterwards. That night and the next day were occupied by him in forming his cabinet. On Sunday, the 19th, he was able to give the Assembly a list of the new ministry, and to lay down his programme. On the same evening he set out with M. Jules Simon for Paris; and went to Versailles alone, according to his own desire, very early on Tuesday morning, the 21st. On his arrival there an unforeseen difficulty presented itself.

The Assembly had appointed a committee of fifteen, who were to proceed to Paris in order to assist the negotiators with their presence and

advice, without, however, sharing their responsibility. This measure was also taken for the purpose of diminishing as far as possible the inconvenience arising from the seat of the Assembly being at Bordeaux, while the conditions of peace were under discussion at Versailles. The commissioners got M. de Chaudordy to apply in London for a safe conduct; a needless precaution, which retarded their journey by a day, and irritated Count Bismarck, who was anxious to prevent all intervention by the neutral powers. The Count acquainted M. Thiers with these details at the outset of the interview, and did so with vehemence only slightly tempered with courtesy towards his illustrious interlocutor. After this unpleasant incident, a prolongation of the armistice was agreed upon. That evening M. Thiers wrote to M. Jules Simon, "I have been fighting all day with Count Bismarck. I have obtained a prolongation of the armistice until midnight on Sunday" (that was Tuesday), "but had to struggle hard for it, which shows that our critical position could not last long." At that time Count Bismarck wanted to limit the negotiators to a very short time, because he expected his proposals to be accepted as an ultimatum; we shall see that he relaxed this rigorous rule towards the end of the negotiations, when the principal bases had been agreed upon;

and that he then consented, without difficulty, to prolong the armistice until the 12th March; but on Tuesday, 21st February, the day of M. Thiers' arrival, he insisted that everything should be agreed upon and signed by the 26th, and obstinately refused to grant one more day. That point settled, he made known his proposals; France was to pay an indemnity of six milliards, to give up the whole of Alsace, including Belfort, Metz with its fortresses, and a considerable portion of Lorraine; the Prussians were to enter Paris, and remain there until the ratification of peace.

M. Thiers protested against conditions which he declared to be not only exorbitant, but impracticable. Six milliards represented more than twice the savings of France. It was not a war indemnity; two milliards would have been ample to reimburse Germany for her expenses and her material losses. Six milliards were demanded with the evident design of exhausting the resources of France. Had Germany considered the consequences to herself and to the whole of Europe of reducing a nation with such a geographical position as ours, and concerned in all the commercial and financial operations of the world, to poverty and ruin? Had Germany weighed the results of the monetary disturbance which would infallibly ensue from the payment of such a

sum? Nor was the dismembering of France more politic, or more practicable. The populations would not give themselves up, France could not deliver them over; the fifteen commissioners would not permit the discussion to be carried on upon such foundations. It is a dictate of wisdom that a lasting and true peace should be made after war; but in this case the two countries were condemned to perpetual division. This would not end war, but merely suspend hostilities, for France could never rest so long as the two provinces were exiled from her breast. We could not, without vainglorious folly, pretend that in carrying on the war we had any hope of victory; but Germany knew what it would cost her to destroy the last armies of France. If we were driven to despair, our enemies might crush us, but we would not submit to degrading conditions. M. Thiers was not satisfied with speaking thus to Count Bismarck only; he requested an audience of the Emperor. It was granted reluctantly, and was very brief. The Emperor declined any political discussion. He could not hinder M. Thiers from reminding him, in a few ardent though respectful words, of all the arguments against this policy of extermination. In short, M. Thiers obtained nothing on the first day. All his genius, all his eloquence, were expended in

vain upon an inflexible resolution. He returned to Versailles on the following day, again unaccompanied. Having a very high opinion of Count Bismarck's political capabilities, he wished to speak with him privately in the language of politics. He hoped to prove to him that the cession of Metz would make the two nations enemies for ever, and that France, though ever so willing, could not pay six milliards. But he found the Chancellor of the Empire more inflexible than before, more inimical to every idea of negotiation or arrangement. Count Bismarck asserted that in Germany, "the most thinking men" estimated the losses sustained by the country at fifteen milliards. He was universally taxed with weakness for having demanded only six. He was even on the point of refusing all further conversation, alleging that his proposals constituted an ultimatum requiring a simple yes or no in answer.

M. Thiers replied that an armistice had been concluded; that in virtue of the very terms of that agreement, an Assembly had been summoned to deliberate upon peace or war; that he had come in the name of that Assembly, and consequently in the name of all France, on the strength of a convention signed by Count Bismarck, on the faith of a treaty, in the character of a negotiator, having a right to be heard, and not as the envoy

of an army which has surrendered at discretion, and has only to receive the orders of the conqueror. Count Bismarck was slightly confused at having given way to a fit of passion, so insulting to us, and so little worthy of him. He resumed the conversation, but did not yield an inch of ground. He even announced to M. Thiers that he was benevolently exerting himself to facilitate our payment of the six milliards, and that he had found two financiers who were disposed to undertake the operation by sure and easy means. "You will pay," said he, "without perceiving it." M. Thiers returned to Paris, believing that he had gained nothing.

Next day (Thursday, February 23rd) the aforesaid bankers presented themselves. Count Bismarck had good reason to boast of their skill and importance; they were no less personages than Count Heukel and Herr Black-Schröder, the two chief bankers in Germany. M. Thiers would not listen to them except in the presence of the commissioners. Their system was ingenious enough; it would have given us, or rather sold us, time, and it resolved itself into the doubling of our indemnity. They argued at great length, but of course our commissioners were no more tempted to accept their proposals than was M. Thiers; they submitted to this interview as he

did, as an additional trial; and were resolved beforehand to trust to France for rescue from our embarrassments, and not to the interested expertness of our enemies.

After this interview, which took place in the morning, M. Thiers returned to Versailles, accompanied by M. Jules Favre, who left him no more until the negotiations were concluded. They were immediately informed by Count Bismarck that the Emperor had consented to reduce the indemnity by one milliard. All the entreaties, all the arguments of the negotiators to obtain a more equitable and less overwhelming assessment, were unavailing. It was agreed, in order to save time, that a preliminary treaty should be made, defining the bases of peace only; but that the stipulations in detail should be reserved for an ulterior treaty. Thus, during those three days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the discussion was confined to the amount of the indemnity, the mode and dates of payment to correspond with the successive evacuation of the territory by the German troops, the territorial concessions, and the entry of the Prussians into Paris. M. Thiers' great achievement was his obtaining that Belfort should be left to France. He won this success, so to speak, by main force. M. Jules Favre has described this incident with so much passion and energy,

that we feel bound to place his narrative before our readers.

"I see him still," says M. Jules Favre, "pale, agitated, now sitting, now standing; I hear his voice, broken by grief, his faltering words, his accents at once beseeching and proud, and I know nothing grander than the sublime passion of that noble heart, breaking out into lamentation, menace, and entreaty.

"When, with his own inimitable eloquence, he had set forth the immensity of our sacrifices, the unexampled rigour that imposed an overwhelming indemnity on us, in addition to the mutilation of our territory, upon the ancient ties that bound us to a town which had never belonged to Germany and had nothing Germanic about it, seeing the inflexibility of his hearer, he cried out, 'Well then! let it be as you will Count! These negotiations are nothing but a sham. We appear to be discussing, but we are merely to pass under your yoke. We ask of you a city which is altogether French; you refuse: this is to admit that you have determined upon a war of extermination. Make that war then! Ravage our provinces, burn our houses, slaughter the inoffensive inhabitants; in a word, complete your work. We will fight you until our last breath. We may be defeated, but at least we shall not be dishonoured!'

"Count Bismarck seemed moved. M. Thiers' emotion had touched him; he replied that he understood what M. Thiers must be suffering, and that he would be glad to be able to make a concession. 'But,' he added, 'it would be wrong of me to promise what I cannot grant. The King has commanded me to keep to our conditions; he alone has the right to modify them. I must take his orders. I must also confer with General Moltke. If I have his consent, I shall be stronger.' He then left the room.

"In a quarter of an hour he came back. The King was out walking and would not return until dinner-time, General Moltke was also out. Our suspense may be imagined. It was at its height when, about half an hour after, General Moltke was announced. We did not see him; Count Bismarck shut himself up with him."

"I think no accused man ever waited for a verdict in more feverish agony of mind. Motionless and mute, we followed with scared eyes the hands of the clock that was about to strike the hour of our sentence. The door opened at last, and, standing on the threshold, Count Bismarck spoke: 'I was commanded by the King to insist upon the entry of our troops into Paris. You have expressed to me your repugnance and your fears, and earnestly requested that this clause may

be withdrawn. We will give it up if, on your side, you will leave us Belfort.'

"'Nothing,' replied M. Thiers, 'can equal the grief which Paris must feel in opening the gates of its unconquered walls to the enemy who has been unable to force them. Therefore we have besought you, and do still beseech you, not to inflict this unmerited humiliation upon the city. Nevertheless it is ready to drink the cup to the dregs, so that one bit of its soil and an heroic city may be preserved to the country. We thank you, Count, for having afforded Paris the opportunity of ennobling its sacrifice. The mourning of Paris shall be the ransom of Belfort, which we now persist, more than ever, in claiming.' 'Reflect,' said Count Bismarck: 'perhaps you will regret having rejected this proposal.' 'We should fail in our duty if we accepted it,' replied M. Thiers. The door was once more closed, and the two Prussian statesmen resumed their conference."

"It seemed to us to last an age; after General Moltke's departure, the Chancellor informed us that there was only the King to convince. Despite our impatience, we had to wait until the monarch had finished his meal; it was nearly half-past six, when Count Bismarck went to him. At eight M. Thiers reaped the fruits

of his valiant effort. He had given back Belfort to France."

Rightly to estimate the importance of this success, it must be borne in mind that between the Vosges hills and the Jura range, there is a deep hollow through which all our invaders have passed at every epoch. The fortress of Belfort was built to command this pass. If Belfort had remained in the hands of the Germans they would have had a ready-made road between the Jura and the Vosges, by which to penetrate into the heart of France. After the loss of Strasburg the possession of Belfort had become indispensable to us. M. Thiers fought for it during fourteen hours, and while he was making this almost desperate struggle, he, who looked upon peace as absolutely necessary, asked himself several times if it would not be better to go on with the war, than to leave our eastern frontier open to fresh invasion.

When, on his return to Paris, M. Thiers made known his unhoped-for success to the commission, all the members expressed boundless gratitude to him. It was not only a few leagues of territory he restored to us; it was an important position upon our frontiers. Every evening, on returning from Versailles, M. Thiers made the commissioners, who were pledged to the strictest secrecy, thoroughly

acquainted with all that had passed. He even found time, before taking a few hours' rest, to write to M. Jules Simon. "We made our first report to the commission yesterday," he wrote, on the 24th of February. "They did not seem ill-pleased. We have laid such stress upon secrecy that I count a little upon their observing it. The ignorance the Bourse is in proves that the secret is pretty well kept. In two days we shall know where we are."

On the 25th he wrote: "Yesterday, M. Jules Favre and I passed eight hours in conference with Count Bismarck. We set out at half-past eleven in the morning, and were at Paris by ten o'clock in the evening. I would France could see what we have done to save her from loss and humiliation. The peace is to be signed this evening, and I have asked myself twenty times whether we shall have peace after all. It is certainly not so bad as we might have feared, in our position, at the feet of a conqueror who knows we can expose France to frightful havoc, that we can prolong a bloody and destructive struggle, but that we cannot alter the ultimate result. Do not say a word of this to any one, above all about the nature of the peace. It must not be subjected beforehand to party discussion.

"If, as we hope, it be signed this evening

(under the form of precise preliminaries), we will announce it to you by telegraph to-morrow morning. We shall leave on Monday, if we can, for every hour costs us millions."

Peace was not signed on Saturday. On his arrival at Versailles on that day, M. Thiers found Count Bismarck particularly excited. His manner of receiving M. Thiers was constrained and haughty, his language was sharp, all but menacing. He accused M. Thiers of wanting to spin out the conference, and of seeking pretexts for recommencing the war. Our negotiators easily penetrated the secret of the Chancellor's irritation. He had been advised officially the day before, that the English Government intended to make certain representations to Germany concerning the amount of the war indemnity. The Count went so far as to say, "I see plainly your only aim is to begin the campaign again, and you will have the support and advice of your good friends, the English." By testifying a desire that the indemnity should be reduced to a sum, the payment of which might reasonably be expected, England gave us the only support we could hope for from her after all that had passed; and, far from thinking of beginning the war again, M. Thiers and M. Jules Favre were only bent upon hastening the conclusion of peace.

Count Bismarck harshly and violently spurned our assurances of our pacific intentions, which at that stage of the business he could not have doubted had he been calm and collected. "It is very good of me," he said roughly, "to take the trouble you condemn me to; our conditions are an ultimatum; you must either accept or reject them. I will have nothing more to do with it; bring an interpreter to-morrow; henceforth I will not speak French." And, in fact, he began to talk in German with extreme vehemence.

M. Thiers showed that he was offended, but without departing an instant from his dignity and composure. This stormy and cruel day was but so much time lost, after all. Count Bismarck eagerly insisted upon our accepting his two bankers, and his system of payments and financial operations; M. Thiers persisted in his refusal. When they separated for the evening at ten o'clock, everything remained as agreed upon in the terms accepted on the preceding days. There only remained the transcription and signature of the agreements. It was decided that the signatures on both sides should be affixed the next day, Sunday, February 26th, at half-past one o'clock. Our negotiators arrived punctually at the place of meeting; but they had to wait three hours before the documents were ready. The duplicate copies

being brought in and compared, Count Bismarck announced that he was about to summon "his colleagues" of Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Baden. They came in, heard the treaty read without offering an observation, and affixed their signatures. Count Bismarck sent for a golden pen which had been presented to him by the ladies of a German town for use on this occasion. M. Thiers and M. Jules Favre did not exchange a word on their journey back to Paris. M. Thiers had tears in his eyes all the way; he dried them in silence; he was a prey to the most terrible grief the heart of a man can feel. Instantly on reaching the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he sent off a telegram in cipher to Bordeaux, as follows :—

"The Chief of the Executive to M. Jules Simon.

"Paris, February 27th, 7 p.m.

"The preliminaries of peace have been signed to-day, after a long and painful contest. The conditions are severe with respect to money, but as regards territory they are less disadvantageous than was to be feared. Belfort and five-sixths of Lorraine are restored to us. The war indemnity is five milliards, the payment to be spread over several years.

"As it is fitting the National Assembly should

have the first knowledge of the conditions, make nothing public but the fact that peace is concluded."

M. Thiers arrived at Bordeaux on the 28th of February: he immediately entered the Assembly, which was sitting, and read a bill, which commenced with the following words: "The National Assembly, having to bear the consequences of deeds of which it is not the author, ratifies the preliminaries of peace, the text of which is hereto annexed, etc." M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire afterwards read the Articles of peace.

Article I. comprises the cession of territory. We lose Alsace, with the exception of Belfort and its territory. We retain the whole of Lorraine, with the exception of Metz, its territory, and a few villages.

Article II. stipulates for the indemnity of five milliards. One milliard is to be paid in the course of the year 1871, and the remainder of the debt within a period of three years dating from the ratification of peace.

Article III. regulates the details of the evacuation, which is to take place at three periods: the first to begin immediately after the ratification of peace; the second after the payment of the first half milliard, and the third after the payment of two milliards. During the third period, and until the complete liquidation of the debt, only the

departments of Marne, Ardennes, Upper Marne, Meuse, Vosges, Meurthe, Belfort and its territory, will continue to be occupied by the Prussians.

The occupation of the interior of Paris and of the forts on the left bank of the Seine will cease after the ratification of peace, that of the fort on the right bank and of the department of the Seine after the payment of the first half milliard.

The French army is to retire beyond the Loire until the signature of the final treaty of peace, leaving upon the left bank only such garrisons as are indispensable for the fortresses, and 40,000 men to form the guard of Paris. From the date of the payment of two milliards, the army of occupation is not to exceed 50,000 men in number. The Emperor of Germany states that he will be disposed to accept a financial guarantee at the same date, as an equivalent for the guarantee resulting from the territorial occupation.

Article IV. suppresses all requisitions in money and in kind, on the French Government undertaking to provide rations for the German troops.

Article V. protects the interests of the citizens in the ceded territories; and secures to them the right of declaring for France, without having to suffer any loss of property.

Article VI. provides that the prisoners of war shall be given up immediately after the ratification

of the preliminaries, and prescribes the necessary measures for accelerating that operation.

Article VII. designates Brussels as the place in which negotiations for the final treaty of peace shall be opened, immediately after the ratification of the preliminary treaty.

Article VIII. restores the collection of taxes to the French Government at once; the administration, properly so called, will not be restored to them until after the ratification of the final treaty of peace.

The two last articles (Articles IX. and X.) are simply a matter of form. Added to this was a special agreement in four articles, which M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire also read from the tribune.

Article I. prolongs the armistice until the 12th March.

The fourth article of the convention of the 28th January was to the effect that the German troops should not enter Paris. This was replaced by Article II. in these terms: "That part of the city of Paris, which is within the enceinte, and lies between the Seine, the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Avenue des Ternes, will be occupied by German troops, not exceeding 30,000 men in number. The manner of occupation and the arrangements for billeting the German troops in this part of the city shall be settled by agree-

ment between two superior officers of the two armies, and access to it will be forbidden to the French troops and the National Guard so long as the occupation lasts."

Article III. forbids the German troops to levy contributions in money in the occupied territory, but it authorizes the Germans to collect the taxes due to the state.

Lastly, in virtue of the Article IV., the two contracting parties are at liberty to end the armistice after the 3rd of March, with a delay of three days for the resumption of hostilities, if such should take place.

If we refer to Count Bismarck's requirements as they were formulated on the 21st February, we shall see at once what had been obtained by our negotiators. We owed to them the fortress of Belfort and the reduction by a milliard of the sum at first demanded. We owed to them the eventual substitution of a financial for a territorial guarantee, after the payment of two milliards, the suppression of requisitions in money and in kind, the immediate restoration of our prisoners, the re-establishment of the French authorities after the signing of the peace. These concessions, wrung with immense difficulty from Count Bismarck, by dint of talent and energy, had appeared to M. Thiers, M. Jules Favre, and the parliamen-

tary commission, to be a succession of victories; but to the Assembly, who only saw the total result of the negotiations, that result was overwhelming. The reading of the articles was listened to with consternation, and in gloomy silence, interrupted from time to time by a spontaneous groan from the benches. All this had been foreseen, yet it all seemed new. So it is with those who gather round the dying; vain is their knowledge that the agony cannot last long, the actual death always takes them by surprise and redoubles their anguish.

M. Thiers demanded "urgency." There were a thousand reasons for voting it. And yet, how was the Assembly, hardly recovered from the harrowing emotion evoked by the words which had been just read, to consummate so terrible a sacrifice? Those who would have had the war to continue demanded at least time for inquiry and discussion. M. Tolain, M. Millière, M. Langlois, M. Turquet, opposed urgency, which was, however, carried by a large majority. M. Schœlcher and M. Gambetta asked for an adjournment until the next day, in order that the bill might be printed and distributed. But M. Thiers insisted that the Chamber, despite the lateness of the hour, should at once go into committee. "There are," said he, "only three or four questions in this treaty for you to settle. A long and earnest examination was

necessary for the negotiators; they discussed in despair, and even with tears, each several condition of the treaty; they put forth all their strength in the effort to preserve to the country her territory and her wealth; but for you, I repeat, there are only three or four questions whose solution is in all minds and all hearts." He returned to the charge over and over again, replying to every objection: "One thing only I ask of you; to testify, by a vote, to your zeal for the execution of the treaty.

"By the simple manifestation of this disposition, you may exercise considerable influence over the state of Paris; you may even save our capital from a great misfortune."

In these words M. Thiers gave the real, the principal reason for his persistence. According to the terms of the treaty, the Prussians were to evacuate Paris immediately upon the ratification of peace. They had not yet entered Paris on the 28th. Arrangements had to be made with the Commissariat and the staff, and they were not to enter Paris until the 1st. The Emperor proposed to come in on the 3rd, and to hold a review in the Champs-Elysées. In Paris nothing else was thought of, whilst at Bordeaux, where the treaty was new, the "shameful and unacceptable" peace was the sole topic. On the 26th February, M.

Jules Favre wrote to M. Jules Simon, "We have no security against some mad act on the entry of the Prussians into Paris. They will occupy the Champs-Elysées so far as the Tuileries. They are to remain until the ratification of the preliminaries. The ratification must therefore be speedy. Besides, what good can discussion do? Who has not an opinion to give? Is it not an impiety to expose the misfortunes of our country; and a crime to add to them the spectacle of civil dissensions? The Assembly will understand this. Our colleagues' hearts bleed with ours. They will think as we do."

The discussion which took place on the 1st March was in fact very short, occupying as it did only one sitting; but it was very passionate. The reporter was M. Victor Lefranc. "We desire but one thing," said he, "for the strengthening and the pacifying of our consciences. It is that this peace may be disapproved of only by those who would have ventured to resolve upon prolonging war." In these words all was said. M. Edgar Quinet, M. Victor Hugo, and M. Louis Blanc made admirable speeches on the terrible concessions demanded by Prussia, and the possibility of renewing the struggle. "Until now," said M. Quinet, "conquerors have contented themselves with laying their hands upon a territory, with

taking possession of it by force. They kept it if they could. That was the right of war. Now Prussia has advanced entirely novel claims. After having seized upon Alsace and Lorraine, she demands that this taking of possession shall be consecrated by universal suffrage. What is up to the present time a depredation only would then become a right, sanctioned by the French themselves!" Victor Hugo pointed out the political consequences of such a dismemberment. "Henceforth," he said, "there are in Europe two nations which will be formidable, the one because it will be victorious, the other, because it will be vanquished." He affirmed that Germany would not keep her conquest. "Taking is not keeping. Possession supposes consent. Did Turkey possess Athens? Did Austria possess Venice? Does Russia possess Warsaw? Does Spain possess Cuba? Does England possess Gibraltar?" Victor Hugo was in the right; but he was wrong to be in the right before an Assembly which was under the yoke of inexorable necessity. The more the Assembly saw and felt as he did, the more angry with him they grew. They ended by forgetting that respect which was doubly due to the person of Victor Hugo and to the cause he was defending. He remembered this, on the 8th March, when being desirous to express the gratitude of the Republi-

cans towards Garibaldi, he was again interrupted and attacked by the Right. He sent in his resignation on the spot. In vain M. Grévy implored him to withdraw it, and even refused to read it. Victor Hugo persisted. His letter of resignation was read at the sitting next day. "It is one more misfortune added to so many others," exclaimed Louis Blanc, "that this powerful voice should be silenced at the very moment when it was proclaiming the country's gratitude for eminent services. This sentiment will be shared by all who cherish or revere genius fighting for liberty."

M. Victor Hugo, in opposing the treaty of peace, had declared that France would one day take her revenge upon Germany. "France will be heard to say: It is my turn! Germany, behold me!!! Am I your enemy? No, I am your sister! I have taken all, and now restore it upon one condition, that we become but one people, one family, one single Republic. I am about to demolish my fortresses, you shall destroy yours. My vengeance is brotherly love!"

The orators, who followed him, spoke only of war. They maintained that we might still fight with hopes of success. M. Brunet proposed the formation of a military commission to examine our means of action. M. Louis Blanc asked, "Could we not find means to

disconcert the Prussians in the science of murder, and the mathematics of carnage, by forming all the elements of our strength into one homogeneous whole, substituting partisan warfare for a great war; avoiding pitched battles, no longer opposing a mass of men, raised hap-hazard, and undisciplined, to hostile armies, strong in organization and numbers, but a large number of small corps, whose varied, ceaseless, and unforeseen action would harass and weaken the enemy, and baffle its strategy."

M. Thiers had ascended the tribune the first time, only, as it were, to ask that he might not be called upon to speak.

"If I could have seen," he said, "the slightest chance of maintaining the struggle, of maintaining it successfully, never would I have subjected myself to one of the greatest sorrows of my life, that of signing the preliminaries of peace which I have brought you. It is my absolute conviction of the impossibility of continuing this struggle, which has constrained me to bow my head before the strength of the foreigner. I entreat you not to impose upon me the necessity of explaining the grounds of my conviction; my silence is a sacrifice which I make to the safety and the future of my country. (*Hear! hear!*) Yes, my profound conviction is, that by making peace to-day, and by submitting

to this great trial, we are saving the future of our country, and securing her future greatness. This hope alone could have determined me. I offer no advice to the Assembly; I can only counsel it by my example. (*Hear! hear!*) I have imposed upon myself, I repeat, one of the most cruel sorrows of my life." At this point the speaker was overcome by emotion, and the Assembly broke out into applause. "I conjure my honourable colleagues not to force me to explain myself further. The interests of our country alone could constrain me to enter more at length upon this discussion."

It may be said that nearly all the Assembly understood these words, and shared the sentiments of the speaker. Even of the hundred and seven representatives who voted some hours afterwards against the ratification of the treaty, more than half recognized, not the impossibility of fighting, for no such impossibility existed, but the impossibility of victory. Certain orators, however, insisted upon speaking against the sufficiently-evident feeling of the Assembly. To what end it would be hard to tell, for each member had reflected upon and studied the matter; it was the great care, the great trouble of the moment; no Frenchman could banish it from his thoughts. The deputies who had accepted so great a respon-

sibility were not suddenly enlightened on this occasion as to the state of our resources. Each had made up his mind beforehand. In the bureaus, where all the details might be entered into, and where publicity does not exist, there might have been discussion, in order to convince; at a public sitting, to discuss was to accuse. And, in fact, the bearing of every speech was an accusation against M. Thiers.

"This is a peace which cannot be accepted, you say. A treaty of shame! Let him who speaks of shame stand up!" cried M. Thiers, who was at last obliged to reascend the tribune and put the truth before those who did not, or feigned not to see it. He did this in a few words. He showed what our regiments were when the war broke out. Blank cadres. We went to war with blank cadres, insufficient war material, an incapable general, an absurd plan of campaign. This was the crime of the Empire. Out of 120 regiments, 117 were made prisoners at Sedan and Metz. It is true that armies were raised to replace these regiments, but those armies were merely masses of men, doomed, in spite of their bravery and the skill of their generals, to defeat and slaughter. A soldier cannot be made in a day; cadres cannot be filled in a year. "Where are they, these armies that sprang from the earth?

In Germany. We have left only 200,000 recruits under arms. The *levée en masse*, supposing it possible, would not give us an officer, or a sergeant. We should resume the contest now, having lost 420,000 men, all our former cadres of trained and experienced officers and sub-officers, an immense quantity of war material, Strasbourg, Metz, Paris, all the positions north of the Loire. It is not the feebleness of France that I come to plead. I would die rather than plead that. I would fain preserve hope, for without hope I could not live. I only want to tell you that your organization has been shattered, and that you cannot put it together again in a few days. If there are any military men here who think that they can say the contrary, let them declare it from this tribune and I will answer them."

In this speech, which occupied only a few minutes, M. Thiers delineated our true position in a few graphic touches; that was neither the time nor place to enter into details. It is the misfortune of representative governments that too often under critical circumstances they cannot tell everything, they cannot assign their true motives. The Assembly had, in the sitting of the 19th February, upon the proposal of M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, ordered an inquiry into the state of our military resources. This inquiry had been

effected with great expedition; the results were not published until the 11th March, but the members of the commission were in possession of the principal items. M. Brunel asserted from the tribune that we could bring into the field a million of men and 12,000 field-pieces. "I am a member of the military commission," said he, "and from the first day to the last I have sought to make myself acquainted with the real state of our forces. I say that, in respect of men, who number a million, and in respect of material, which includes 12,000 field-pieces, we are in such a position, that with great efforts, and under the direction of an earnest executive, it is possible to reestablish our armies and to continue the contest." Thus, in this same sitting of the 1st March, M. Brunet, a member of the commission, talks of a million of men, and M. Thiers, Chief of the Executive, declares that we could not take the field against a regular army of 500,000 soldiers. The Assembly would have been able to account for this apparent contradiction; they would have seen the truth clearly, if the Report of Admiral Jauréguiberry, which was not distributed until ten days afterwards, had been before them. Yes! France had called out a million of men; but of this million, 420,000 were prisoners. There was still an active army of 534,000 men, a reserve of

354,000, and those enrolled in 1871, consisting of 132,000 men, who might be called out at short notice. All these came to more than a million on paper. The error was in thinking that a million of men were at our disposal. Unhappily, the report of M. Jauréguiberry dispelled the illusion. We shall see presently how he rated the active army. Let us begin, like him, with the army of reserve. "The men now existing in the territorial divisions, in the depôts, in Algeria, and a large number of mobilized national guards in the training camps, will form, when armed, equipped, and drilled, the reserve of the active army. At present not more than 53,087 soldiers of various arms could be placed in line. It would be possible, later on, to add to these forces the men enrolled in 1871, whose effective strength amounts to 132,000 recruits. But the Minister of War has not thought it advisable to call out these young men, because he is unable to arm, clothe, and drill them."

Here, then, are nearly 350,000 men, who form our reserves, as the Admiral says, and will make an army, when they have been drilled, disciplined, equipped, and trained. They might indeed be counted upon "to reorganize our army," as M. Brunet said; it is not, however, a question of reorganizing armies, but of having an army to bring into

the field by the 6th of March, the day on which hostilities might be recommenced, according to the terms of the armistice.

Now out of these 354,000, or 500,000 men, if we reckon those enrolled in 1871, how many can be brought into the field on that day—for the particular date is all-important? Admiral Jauréguiberry replies with inexorable precision, 53,087. M. de Guirand gives the same number in a supplementary Report upon the efficiency of the army, but it is noticeable that to the words, "53,100 men, ready for service," he adds, "wanting accoutrements." The active army was then the only force on which we could reckon. "France can only count at present," says the Report, "upon the troops forming the active army. These will be immediately called upon to maintain the struggle should hostilities be recommenced." The effective strength of the ten army corps composing our active army, on the 1st March, 1871, was proved to amount to 534,552 men, a number somewhat short of the million M. Brunet talked of. From this total 2090 had to be deducted for the gendarmerie; 2375 for the staff, 6,408 for the various administrations, in all about 11,000 men. M. de Mornay, who also furnished a Report, deducts, besides, 16,022 men for the free corps. "The free

corps," he says, "which were very numerous at the beginning of the war, are now greatly reduced in numbers. Their presence in advance of the army has been, besides, of very little advantage, and with the exception of some special corps, whose exploits recall the finest traits of heroism in our history, the military authorities have found themselves under the necessity of disbanding most of them. They were sometimes more dangerous than useful, and their insubordination and want of discipline were very injurious to the regular troops." Both Admiral Jauréguiberry and M. de Mornay reported very unfavourably of the mobilized corps. We must quote the admiral's words.

"With regard to the mobilized national guards, whose cadres have been filled by election, we must unfortunately admit that they have hardly rendered any service, and that their ignorance of the art of war, their want of discipline and of steadiness in presence of the enemy, have frequently been the cause of serious evils. Some splendid exceptions ought, however, to be pointed out, for mobilized battalions might be named whose ardour has rivalled that of veteran troops.

"It is not impossible," he adds, "to remedy the relative inferiority of this considerable portion

of our troops; but for this it would be necessary completely to reform their cadres, to give them military instruction and habits of discipline, which need time for their acquirement, under the direction of capable commanders, at once energetic and patient." We must then deduct, according to the Admiral, 135,735 mobilized national guards, who would, like the men of the reserve, have become good soldiers in time; but time was precisely that which we lacked most; and the Germans, aware of our state of disorganization, refused to give us even until the 12th March; and insisted upon the right of recommencing the war at their pleasure. "The armistice may be declared at an end on the 3rd, hostilities may recommence on the 6th." All deductions made, we could actually bring into the field 69,307 men, consisting of regiments of the line, and 135,735 mobilized guards, in all, 204,942 men. These are Admiral Jauréguiberry's figures. "In one word, at present we could in reality only oppose to the enemy's armies 205,000 infantry, including regiments of the line and mobiles; nearly all the rest is a hindrance, and a source of disorder, and can only furnish us with soldiers worthy of the name several months hence."

A force subsequently mentioned by the Admiral must, however, be added to the list; it consisted

of a corps of marines 14,000 strong—one small in numbers, but great in military virtues and worth. Our infantry was thus raised to a total of 220,000 men.

Admiral Jauréguiberry concludes:—

"We have then, outside of special arms, only 220,000 infantry capable of offering resistance."

"Shall this resistance be crowned with the success we all desire so ardently? We dare not even hope it; for we must not hide from ourselves, that to conquer armies, so numerous, so well organized in all respects as those of our enemy, it is indispensable that our troops should be, not only trained and well armed, but, above all, animated by a spirit of dauntless endurance, by contempt of danger, and by an ardent patriotism, which unfortunately they do not all possess.

"The 220,000 infantry upon whom we can count, up to a certain point, are too easily disheartened. A fight prolonged beyond a few hours fatigues and disconcerts them, and as our enemies have always reserves at their command, while the numerical weakness of our army deprives us of a similar resource, the result is, that at the end of an obstinate engagement, during which we have succeeded in maintaining our positions, we are obliged to retreat, because the enemy has been able to make a flank

movement at a great distance, or to recommence the attack with fresh troops.

"Our soldiers would fight with more obstinacy, and would not break their ranks, if the cadres of our regiments were better composed.

"The disasters of the outset of the war have deprived France of nearly all her best officers and sub-officers."

It is necessary to insist upon these details, because it is now constantly said, by men who believe what they say, that we had a million of men to bring into the field, and that we could have reversed our defeat by a *levée en masse*. The facts, for whose accuracy such a man as Jauréguiberry has vouched, are a conclusive answer to all statements of this kind. The commission included eight generals, three colonels on active service, and several retired officers. It is not possible, in the face of such a report, to accuse France of cowardice. She submitted to peace, because she could not continue the war without rushing upon irreparable disaster. The 205,000 with whom we must have opposed the 500,000 disciplined soldiers of the German army, were made up of soldiers of various arms and regiments, for we had no longer a complete regiment of the former line. These soldiers formed a regiment, if you will, because they had a number, colours, and a colonel; but

the real regiment, which is a family, whose officers know their soldiers, and the soldiers their officers, where each man is surrounded by friends and observers, where there is a heritage of honour to defend in common, the regiment which constituted the glory and the strength of the former army of France; where was it? "All these corps," says Jauréguibery, speaking of the 205,000 men, who formed almost the whole of our army; "all these corps have for the most part new cadres, and in capacity and experience are too often defective." When the admiral thus pronounced upon the numbers and condition of our forces, with the sure judgment of a man accustomed to war, he could not foresee the spectacle that should be presented by a part of our army at Paris on the 18th March; he had not seen the soldiers huddled together at Versailles the day after the insurrection, irresolute, undisciplined, hardly knowing whether they would or would not make up their minds to obey and fight. It is true, this same army reformed itself after the first shots were fired; but who among us can ever forget the suspense of all patriots, until the troops of General Vinoy, descending the heights of Montretout, dispersed the insurgents and drove them beyond Neuilly. At that date Germany had already given us back some of our imprisoned

soldiers, the cadres had been reconstituted, which was all-important, and could not have been done but for the peace. To judge what our army could have done if all the prisoners had remained in Germany, by what it actually did, with the good officers and sub-officers belonging to the old regiments and just returned to us, would be to imitate the error of those speakers, who, at the sitting of the 1st March, reckoned raw recruits, who did not know how to handle a musket if they had even had muskets to handle, as fighting men fit to march against the enemy. Two facts were incontestably proved by Admiral Jauréguiberry's Report: one, that we could not fight to-day; the other, that we might recover to-morrow. Thus, then, we must submit to peace, if we would reserve the future to ourselves. A re-perusal of M. Thiers' speech on that memorable and sorrowful occasion, on which the Assembly ratified the treaty of peace, must lead to this double conclusion, and we know that the years which have since passed away have confirmed the precision of his words upon those two points.

The Assembly, who at that time had unlimited confidence in him, divined what he did not utter, took his reserve kindly, and hastened to close the discussion in accordance with his advice, in which they all concurred. It was indeed more than

time to have done with it. On that very day, the 1st March, the Prussians invaded the Champs Elysées; the Emperor of Germany was to make his solemn entry two days later. By an immediate vote Paris might be delivered after an occupation of forty-eight hours, and the military *fêtes*, which would have been an insult to us, and dangerous to all, prevented. M. Thiers had only been able to hint at this, M. Cochery reiterated it pertinaciously. The sitting had been already prolonged by the incident, due to the imprudence of M. Conti, which had led to the declaration of the deposition of the Imperial dynasty. M. Henri Martin, M. André (of Moselle), M. Langlois, M. Brisson, M. Delescluze, M. Floquet, M. Clemenceau, M. Tolain, and others had put down their names, but they all waived their right to speak. What could they have said after such speakers as M. Victor Hugo, M. Edgar Quinet, M. Louis Blanc? What could they have replied to M. Thiers? General Changarnier, in a few supremely dignified words, advised peace. The Assembly voted for peace by 548 votes against 107. It was remarked at the counting, and has since been commented upon, that four generals, Billot, Chanzy, Loysel, and Mazure, had voted against peace. General Deligny abstained from voting, as did the Orleans Princes. On the other hand,

the ratification was voted by nineteen generals and admirals—D'Aqrelles de Paladines, Chabaud-Latour, Chabron, Changarnier, Chareton, Dompierre d'Hornoy, Ducrot, Fourichon, Frebault, Jaurégu.iberry, La Roncière le Noury, Le Flô, Martin des Pallières, Montaignac, Pellissier, Pothuan, Saisset du Temple, and Trochu. Among the four who voted in silence that day, General Chanzy only explained himself afterwards, when he spoke, on the 18th May, 1871, against the final treaty of peace. It would be rash to speculate upon the motives of the other three, but it may be admitted that in the improbable but not impossible case of a resumption of hostilities, they did not wish to record their conviction that success was impossible beforehand.

M. Jules Simon had taken measures that the text of the law, clothed with all the official formalities, should be at once carried to Paris, and communicated to Count Bismarck. The document had been copied beforehand, and prepared for the necessary signatures, which were affixed to it immediately after the vote. A special train was in readiness, and started at once for Paris, carrying deliverance to the capital.

The ratification was the signal for numerous resignations. M. Girot-Pouzol had resigned at the commencement of the sitting. "I could not

make up my mind to vote for the bill," said he; "but as I know that in acting thus I should not give satisfaction to my constituents, I resign my seat." The terms in which the resignation of M. Grosjean and his colleagues of Moselle, and of Upper and Lower Rhine, were tendered, affected the Assembly painfully. They were as follows:—

"The representatives of Alsace and Lorraine, prior to any peace negotiations, laid a declaration before the National Assembly, by which they affirmed, in the name of these provinces, their will and their right to remain French. Delivered over, in contempt of all justice and by an odious abuse of power, to the rule of the foreigner, we have a last duty to fulfil.

"We declare once more that a compact which disposes of us without our consent is null and void."

"It remains for ever open to one and all of us to claim our rights, in such form and measure as our conscience may dictate.

"On quitting this Assembly, in which our dignity no longer allows us to sit, and notwithstanding the bitterness of our grief, the one supreme feeling in the depth of our hearts is gratitude to those who for six months have unceasingly defended us, and of unalterable attachment to the country from which we are violently torn.

"We shall follow you with our hearts, and wait with perfect confidence, until, in the future, regenerated France shall once more resume the course of her great destiny.

"Your brethren of Alsace and Lorraine, now separated from the common family, will preserve a faithful love for France, absent from our firesides, until the day when she shall return and resume her place there."

This document bore twenty-eight signatures, and was followed by the resignation of the three deputies of Meurthe; MM. Varroy, Brice, and Claude. Some of those who resigned again obtained seats in the Assembly, either by new elections, or in consequence of a parliamentary incident which occurred at the sitting of the 11th March, on the resignation of MM. Georges and Denfert-Rochereau, and which we will narrate in this place.

M. Grévy, after having read letters from the two deputies above-mentioned, spoke as follows:—

"The President avails himself of this opportunity to point out to M. Georges and M. Denfert, and also to those among our colleagues, who, finding themselves placed in an analogous position have thought it right to send in their resignation, that notwithstanding the changes of condition which the populations who elected them

have had to undergo, they are, and ought to remain, representatives of the French people. It is my duty to point this out, in the interests of the Assembly, as well as in those of the populations of the Eastern provinces, who will remain French.

"I can only invite M. Georges and those of our colleagues who are in the same position, not to persist in their withdrawal and resignation."

These words received unanimous assent. M. Georges, who was present at the sitting, immediately withdrew his resignation; MM. Varroy, Brice, Claude, Bamberger, André, and Deschange followed his example. Twenty deputies were, however, finally lost to the nation. This was a source of grief to the whole country; and a severe blow to the Republican party, who thus found their numerical strength lessened, and had to regret it bitterly, on one or two important occasions, when they were beaten by a majority of one or two.

The 2nd March brought demonstrations of a different class; first came the collective resignation of MM. Rochefort, Ranc, Tridon, and Malon. The latter signed himself, "B. Malon of the International." Their letter declares the Assembly deposed; and is a formal act of insurrection, a forerunner of the insurrection of the 18th March.

"By the vote of the 1st March the Assembly has delivered up two provinces, dismembered France, ruined the country. It is therefore no longer the voice of the country, and its deliberations are henceforth null and void.

"The votes of the four generals commanding our army corps, and the significant abstention of three others from voting, give a formal contradiction to M. Thiers' assertions that we are incapable of continuing the war.

"Our conscience, therefore, forbids us to sit a day longer in an Assembly whose acts we cannot recognize as valid."

The three generals mentioned in this letter, as having abstained from voting, are General Deligny, the Duc d'Aumale, and M. de Charette. The latter was at Rennes when the vote was taken. His resignation, based upon other motives than the vote of the 1st March, reached the Assembly on the 6th.

M. Félix Pyat's letter is in the same style as that of MM. Rochefort, Ranc, Tridon, and Malon:—

"Citizen President,

"The vote of the National Assembly has imposed a duty of conscience upon me; the duty of declaring that this vote has outraged my mandate. I am the representative of the sovereign people,

and not their master, and if I kept silence before the vote, it was because I was not authorized to discuss such a treaty.

"I have received from the people an imperative mandate. I do not know the mandate of others, but I know my own. It is this: An honourable peace, France and the Republic indivisible.

"I am then bound to protest, not to resign. The Assembly has no power to accept my resignation, for it is dissolved. It no longer represents France, all France, by whom it was called together on the 8th February: it exists no longer.

"Faithful to my mandate, to the unity of France, to the duty of representing her such as she was when her capital did me the honour to elect me, I am bound to protest, by leaving this Assembly, which can no longer represent France in her entirety, and I will never enter it again so long as this parricidal vote shall remain unannulled.

"Greeting and fraternity,

"FELIX PYAT."

M. Ledru Rollin had been beforehand with them all. He resigned on the 28th February, from similar motives, having protested in advance "against the harrowing and fatal things that were about to take place."

Such is, in brief, the sad history of the preliminaries of peace.

The final treaty, which was only the application of the bases laid down by these preliminaries, was discussed at Frankfort during the insurrection of Paris, and voted at Versailles on the 20th May, 1871.

CHAPTER IV.

PARIS BEFORE THE 18TH MARCH, 1871.

THE insurrection of the Commune, which triumphed on the 18th March, did not begin on that day. The same actors, with the same object, may be traced in all the disturbances in February and March, 1871; and again on the 31st of October, and the 22nd of January. It would be an exaggeration to say that they took the chief part on the 4th of September; that day's work was the deed of the entire population. A multitude in which parties were lost, rendered all-powerful by indignation, overturned the Imperial Government, without any consideration of what was to be substituted for it. The future organizers of the Commune were, however, on the spot, and were perhaps the only persons who had a fixed design, and were under control. They were the first to enter the Assembly, and they marched to the Hôtel de Ville

with the premeditated intention of seizing upon the reins of government. They had indeed formed their government beforehand—Blanqui and Delescluze were its chiefs,—and they had already thrown the list of names out of the windows of the Salle St. Jean, among the crowd, when M. Jules Favre appeared upon the balcony, and was saluted by acclamations which put a stop to all competition. They submitted, with a bitter regret, that they did not try to conceal, to the formation of the Government of Defence, improvised on the spur of the moment by the 500,000 men who thronged the Place de la Concorde, the Place de Bourgogne, the quays, the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, and the Hôtel de Ville itself, and who with one voice laid this burden upon the deputies for Paris. Decimated after the *Coup d'Etat* of the 2nd December, and the proscription which ensued, this party had left the Republicans, liberal and conservative, to carry on the struggle against the Empire. They did not appear, either as speakers at the electoral meetings, or as candidates in the elections of 1857, 1858, and 1863. They had a candidate of their own for the first time in the partial elections of 1864. The earliest organization of workmen, which had nothing political about it at the outset, dates from 1862. Sixty delegates, chosen by the workmen out of

the different corporations, were sent at the Government expense to the Exhibition in London. On their return to Paris their reports had to be written out, read in common, and revised for publication: all this took time. The sixty delegates asked nothing better than to become a permanent representation of the workmen, and the workmen asked nothing better than to have one. Two years later, in 1864, the sixty men still formed a sort of central committee, which claimed to speak in the name of the workshops of Paris. The partial elections seemed to offer a good opportunity for asserting themselves. They published a political and social manifesto, and called for a workman candidate. The desired candidate was M. Tolain, who stood against M. Garnier Pagès, and had only 495 votes.

Then it was that Proudhon published his book, entitled "*La Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières.*" "Since," he says, "the working classes have for the first time made an act of will and personality in the elections of 1863-64, since it is upon this occasion that we have heard them stammer their ideas, since their first appearance has been at once a great victory and a great blunder, let us begin by showing them the consequences of the experiment." The great victory was their having beaten the Government, and the

great blunder, according to Proudhon, was their having sacrificed the workmen's candidateship to the bourgeois candidates.

From that moment, the socialist movement, which had been arrested in 1852, increased in importance day by day. Proudhon contributed to this by his writings, M. Tolain by his intelligence and activity, and the Government by a line which they adopted after some hesitation; that of exaggerating the strength of the socialists in their journals and speeches, and throwing the responsibility of socialist doctrines on all Republicans, in order to put themselves forward as the sole guardians of social interests. On the 26th September, 1864, M. Tolain went to London with two other workmen delegates, to be present at the great meeting at St. Martin's Hall, where the bases of the International Association of workmen were laid. On his return he established the office of the French branch in the Rue de Gravilliers, and took care to send the statutes of the association to the Minister of the Interior and the Prefect of Police. He attended as delegate of the French branch at the subsequent congresses of the Association, which took place in London in 1865, at Geneva in 1866, at Lausanne in 1867, at Brussels in 1868, and at Basle in 1869. With that practical good sense which has always distinguished him on

these occasions, he defended the rights of individual property against the Communists, who, however, gained the preponderance, and fixed upon the International Association—whose aim had been for the three first years but ill-defined—the character of a political association, with the claiming of political rights for working men for its immediate object, and Communism for a theory.

The claiming of political rights for working men would have had no seasonableness to French citizens, even under the Empire, if it had been taken in its literal sense. All Frenchmen possessed the same rights both civil and political; the workmen might be elected, like other citizens; no one dreamed of contesting this. But what they called by that name, was not the right to run the same chances with others in the elections, it was the right of having a direct and special representation in Parliament; a bench of workmen in the Corps Legislatif, like the bench of bishops in the Senate. This was, undeniably, a social question; for if the workman be elected in virtue of a common right, he represents equality, but if he be elected because he is a workman, and under the pretext that the workmen have an exceptional right to send members of their own class to Parliament, he no longer represents anything except

the contest between labour and capital. In 1867, after the abortive manifestation of the 2nd November, a search was made at the house of M. Chouteau—a member of the Central Committee in 1871—and the statutes of a secret society, called "The revolutionary Commune of the workmen of Paris," were brought to light.

All workmen were not socialists, and all socialist workmen did not belong to the International Association, which derived much of its importance from the alarm with which it inspired the Conservative party. Nevertheless it grew. A bond of union was naturally formed between it and communist or simply socialist writers, who undertook to spread the opinions of Proudhon and Blanqui, by means of pamphlets, conferences, and newspaper articles. The non-socialist revolutionaries, whose dream was to return to the principles of 1791, and who had Delescluze for their ringleader, could only succeed with the concurrence of the workmen, and therefore supported them in their revolt, without associating themselves with their theories. Processions to the tomb of Baudin, who died for liberty during the "days of December," and the prosecutions to which they gave rise, cemented the alliance. Popular meetings at which attacks upon the Government were mingled with attacks

upon property, and which increased in number after 1868, brought the greater part of the men of the future Commune prominently forward: Peyrouton, the Gaillards, father and son, Longuet, Briosne, Pindy the carpenter, Vermorel, Ducasse, Lefrancais, and Humbert. M. Félix Pyat had also received a sentence in 1863, and had risen in popular favour in consequence. Men who were for agitation by the press, by secret societies, by street rows, reappeared on every side. Then came strikes, menacing combinations, and violent repressions. The troubles of Ricamarie left behind them eleven corpses (nine men and two women); the scenes at Aubin were not less disastrous.

These terrible commentaries upon Communist doctrines rendered them still more odious, and the Government, faithful to its policy, made use of them against its enemies, who, for the most part, repudiated them, and held them in horror. The conservative Republicans, who were objects of hatred and distrust to the Communists, did not think it possible for public opinion to be deceived into holding them responsible for anti-liberal doctrines and practices. They did not repudiate the libel with sufficient energy, and it happened that they gave a pretext to it on more than one occasion. While the Government

was attributing every outbreak of disorder and every false and perverse idea to them, they confined themselves to contemptuous denials, and so great was their need of allies, that they accepted, not indeed compromising alliances, but questionable approaches. They contested the doctrines, but showed too much indulgence for the men who held them. This was a mistake, which may be explained, but not justified, by the violence done in electoral matters by the Empire, its manifold abuses of authority, its financial scandals, and its deplorable foreign policy

In 1869, at the elections, however, an absolute and final separation took place. The revolutionists opposed Jules Favre by Rochfort, Garnier-Pagès by Raspail, Jules Simon by Vallès, Glais-Bizoin by Barbès. They had thought of bringing forward, first Ledru-Rollin, and then Louis Blanc, in all the arrondissements; but these two men seemed "hardly pure" enough. The election of their candidates was to be preliminary to the rising. Clearly to express the aim they had in view, and although Rochefort and Raspail had taken the oath, they called their candidates, "the unsworn." M. Lullier, a candidate in 1869, and afterwards a general under the Commune, wrote in his circular, "Danton will come back from the Shades!" M. Maurice Joly demanded

for the people the right of opposing the promulgation of the laws, election for one year only, an imperative mandate, and a constituent assembly. "A manifestation is expected from the electors of Paris," said Lefrançais, "which will bring all France to herself once more." Citizen Lombard made a direct attack upon the deputies of the Left. "We have," he said, "to name four deputies; what advantage will it be to us to have four irreconcilable deputies the more? We have seen them—these irreconcilable deputies: the word is big, but the deputies are very little. What have they done? Nothing, nothing, nothing. Vote for an unsworn one, without troubling yourselves about anything else concerning him; vote, if you like, for the poorest and most obscure individual, for a rag-picker if you please; but, I beg of you, let him be one who has not taken the oath."

The agitation continued after the elections, which gave the victory to moderate Republicans. The Government had not summoned the Chambers for the 26th of October, although legally required to do so. M. de Kératry proposed to his colleagues that they should meet without being summoned, present themselves formally on the 26th at the Palais Bourbon, and hold their first sitting there. Here was an opportunity ready-

made for the ringleaders; but the reaction on their side also promised themselves a signal triumph, and not without reason. The conservative Republicans nipped the manifestation in the bud. M. Jules Simon came back from Naples on purpose. "I have done all I could," he wrote some time after, in a letter which was made public, "that there should be neither any movement, nor the appearance of any movement, on the 26th; if my popularity suffers in consequence, as you say it will, so much the worse for me, and so much the worse for the cause I serve." His popularity with his own party did not suffer. The sensible and moderate Republicans approved highly of the conduct of the deputies. It was otherwise with the revolutionary party. A meeting was held on the Boulevard Clichy; Millière presided, and MM. Jules Simon, Pelletan, Bancel, and Ferry, were called upon "to explain themselves" as it was called. The explanation degenerated at once into a quarrel, and the deputies, seeing the discussion would be neither free nor fair, withdrew, after having entered a protest.

Day by day the gulf between the Revolutionists and the Liberals widened. MM. Raspail and Rochefort, who sat with the Republican group on the Left, but who never joined their meetings, and were not even on terms of common polite-

ness with the members composing it, introduced a bill on the 8th December which M. Forcade de la Roquette described as a ridiculous notion. "A state is the multiple of the Commune, the Commune is the multiple of the family. The Municipal Council, which is elected for three years, shall nominate the Mayor for a year. In a case of difference between two Communes, a jury of six members shall judge between them; if between two arrondissements, it shall be submitted to the Legislative Body.

"The Legislative Body, freely elected by universal suffrage, is the Commune of the Communes. . . . Progressive taxation shall replace all other taxation. The Legislative Body shall annually fix the amount of the taxes; the Commune shall make the assessment.

"The Legislative Body shall nominate the generals."

The ever-increasing mob of revolutionists and communists were wildly excited by these fine fancies.

M. Rochefort was the idol of this mob. He had it completely in his hands on the day of the funeral of Victor Noir.

He was wise enough not to let it loose on Paris. A word from him was sufficient to restrain it; no one else, except perhaps M. Raspail, would have

been listened to. M. Rochefort was arrested some days afterwards, under circumstances much to be deplored, and which led to a disturbance. M. Flourens illegally arrested a commissary of police; Mégy shot a police agent. The police made 450 arrests. The Left protested against a policy of provocation and repression *à outrance*, without, however, admitting any identification of themselves with the actors or their principals. "I do not understand," said M. Ollivier (15th February, 1870), "how the members of the opposition, who have always frankly declared that their policy was not a revolutionary policy, how men who so openly and freely represent the legal and constitutional opposition, associate themselves with a policy which is a negation of and a satire upon their own policy as well as ours." The Members of the Left neither associated themselves with the policy of Flourens, nor with the crime of Mégy; but they claimed, as was their duty, the protection of the forms of law even for the men who calumniated and condemned them.

What had they in common with the doctrines and conduct of Assi, the leader of the strike at Creuzot, with the regicidal speech of Félix Pyat, at the anniversary banquet of January 21st, with the attempted assassination by Beaury, with the thirty-eight accused members of the International,

and the seventy-two men accused at Tours? It was an indelible stain upon the deputies of the Left, in the eyes of the Jacobins and Socialists, that they were liberals, and bourgeois, Republicans after their own manner, not the right one, and partisans of equality before the law, which by maintaining property, hereditary succession, and the pretended rights of capital, allows privileges to subsist.

At the sitting of the Federal Council of the International Association on the 12th of January, 1871, it was proposed to the Association to accept as their organ *La Lutte à outrance*, a journal founded by a society which called itself a republican association; Leo Frankel, an important member of the Federal Council, and subsequently a member of the Commune, said, "I accept *La Lutte à outrance*. The French workman (Frankel is a Prussian) has need of an idol, let him have one; but let us hate and fight the bourgeoisie with him. The bourgeois Republic is no longer to be discussed; *La Lutte à outrance* ought to discuss the social Republic." All these men, who were afterwards the Commune, Protot, Millière, Félix Pyat, Cournet, Razoua, Flourens, Ferré, Fontaine, Jaclard, Gromier, Mégy, Sapia, Tibaldi, Raoul Rigault, shared Leo Frankel's contempt and dislike for the bourgeois Republic. Protot

and Triton, who were barristers, Millière a doctor of laws, Félix Pyat a literary man, Flourens a tutor, Raoul Rigault a medical student, were enemies of the bourgeoisie, as the revolutionists of 1793 were enemies of the nobility; the deputies of the Left were odious to them as bourgeois, or, what was the same thing in their eyes, as enemies of Socialism. They would all have said, with Tony Moillin, a doctor, who became one of the mayors of Paris under the Commune, "The deputies deceive you shamefully."

The wrath of these men, already fierce enough under the Empire, grew still fiercer after the 4th September, when power had slipped through their fingers. Lacord said at the Federal Council of the Workmen's Association on the 10th June, 1871, "The working men ought to have seized the government on the 4th September; if they had done their duty, the 31st October would have turned out very differently. If the International had had a newspaper, it would have killed the Government." Others of the same party, if not the same association, had newspapers, by whose aid they tried to "kill" the Government. They never ceased during the siege to insist that the people were invincible, that in order to raise the blockade of Paris it was only necessary to put the whole National Guard in action; they de-

manded that Flourens should be made governor of Paris, and General-in-chief of the army; they maintained, even at the moment of the capitulation, that we had an army intact of 300,000 men, and provisions for three months, nay, for six. Riots, journals, pamphlets, handbills, declamatory speeches in the clubs, the streets, the cafés, and the guard-houses, all were employed by them against the bourgeois Government installed at the Hôtel de Ville.

Not only did the members of the Commune not spring from the earth on the 18th March, they had been severally known by their names for more than two years, their influence had been felt for more than six years; their object and means of action were known; the repulses they had sustained might be computed, and the progress of their strength measured.

Under the Empire they had had their journals, their clubs, and the International Association; a small group, but rendered powerful by its organization. For the accomplishment of their ends, a more comprehensive organization, and a more definite authority were requisite.

When the National Guard was reorganized, after the 4th September, with a great extension of its numbers, these persons perceived that if they could establish their influence with that

body they should be masters of the Government, for they would possess, in that case, both numbers and strength. They did not concern themselves about getting rank in the Guard in which the "steps" were much disputed, and indeed created personal influence, instead of the collective influence which was really desirable. They tried to get into the existing councils of the National Guard, and to form new ones. Similar efforts, made by others, resulted in advantage to them. There were meetings of officers, meetings of the majors, Vigilance Committees—committees and meetings were in fashion just then, because everybody wanted to make speeches and manifestations, to be a president or a delegate. The future members of the Commune insinuated themselves everywhere. They entered, too, into those committees of armament and the family councils, which the Government itself had instituted in each company. These latter councils, charged with administrative details, and invested with certain disciplinary powers, had rapidly acquired influence, which preponderated in certain battalions; and to this the authorities themselves had contributed by employing them as paymasters. This office was at first placed in the hands of the sectors, who knew neither the officers nor men, and had neither time nor means to

exercise an efficacious control. It was afterwards handed over to the mayors of arrondissements; but the same difficulties arose, although in a minor degree, and the mayors, overwhelmed with other business, begged to be exonerated from this. The family councils were better qualified to appreciate the wants of the battalion, and to detect frauds; they accepted with eagerness a task which the others had abandoned; being paymasters, they speedily became masters of the men, and then by means of federation they became masters of the battalion. The family council absorbed the armament and vigilance committees nearly everywhere, and assumed their functions. The arrondissements also had vigilance committees, which had been suggested by those of the National Guard, but had greater power, because it was general and irresponsible. The officers were reduced in a few weeks to being mere instructors. They commanded at drill, indeed, but like their men, they were subservient to the occult authority of the committees and the councils. This became strikingly evident on the 31st October, when several battalions came to the Hôtel de Ville, with drums beating and led apparently by their officers, who were, however, devoted adherents of the Government. The men came to a sudden halt, when they had arrived at

the gate, and raising the butt-ends of their muskets, shouted, "No Armistice!" More than one officer, appreciating the difference between being and seeming, between authority and the mere show of it, relinquished his rank that he might become a member of the vigilance committee or the family council. The idea of federation between the battalions, or the committees which led the battalions, was suggested by the International Association, and spread rapidly. All the affiliated were aware that if they gave the National Guard a political organization outside its military one, it would obtain the mastery of Paris.

The federation was not complete all at once. In its case also, the same idea had arisen in more than one quarter at the same time. The Central Vigilance Committee gave signs of life before any of the others. It had existed since the 4th September, and issued proclamations; they were, however, lost in the multitude of such things, and attracted public attention in only a very slight degree.

After the battle of Champigny (2nd December), the Central Committee posted a demand for war *à outrance* and the impeachment of the Government, and by this bold stroke took the lead. Thenceforward it called itself "The Republican Federation of the National Guard," to dis-

tinguish itself from the vigilance committees of the arrondissements. Twenty days later it began the periodical publication of its red placards, which were thenceforth eagerly perused by all those who made, wished for, or approved of the insurrection of the 31st October. The Republican Federation of the National Guard did not seek the shelter of anonymity. The red placards were signed by members of the Committee; those who signed them oftenest, and took the most active part in drawing them up, were Bouis, Barroud, Chouteau, Fabre, Gandier, Gouhier, Grêlier, Lavalette, Moreau, Pougeret, Prudhomme, and Rousseau.

According to General Vinoy, the Central Committee, which led the insurrection of the 18th of March, originated in the following appeal to the National Guard, signed Lemaître, and which was widely distributed:—

"Proposal made to the National Guard of the Seine,

"With the view of securing the unity of action of the National Guard for the present and for the future, we propose immediately to establish a committee in each of the arrondissements of Paris, composed of one guard and one officer from every battalion. Each of these committees shall name a

delegate, and these delegates united shall form a central committee, to deal with urgent questions relating to the thorough organization of the National Guard.

"This new organization should be composed as follows:—

"Each arrondissement should place at its head a naval or other officer, with the title of General of the arrondissement.

"The generals should select from among themselves for their general-in-chief, a man with a strong sense of his duty, and of the responsibility to devolve upon him at a given moment; who would have this colossal army of citizens in his hands, whether to prevent us from falling into the snares the enemy might set for us with a view to the occupation of Paris, or to arrange the final fate of France.

"The officers of the 145th battalion, forming a Preliminary Commission.

LEMAÎTRE, *Commandant*.
MAROTET, *Captain*, &c.

"Battalions are requested to signify their approval without delay, and to send in the names of provisional delegates.

"Café of the National Guard, 49, Rue de Bretagne."

This idea was not, as General Vinoy supposes, a novel one. It had already occurred to the members of the Republican Federation, and the position of Paris after the capitulation suggested the same project to many groups among the citizens.

On the 15th February, one Chalain, a man of twenty-five or twenty-six years old, a turner by trade, and a member of the International Association and of the Commune, instigated certain inhabitants of the 15th arondissement to summon a meeting of the delegates of all the battalions at the Vaux-Hall. The meeting was adjourned, after a rambling debate, to the 24th, on which day no less than 2000 delegates attended. The Republican Federation of the National Guard, which was already completely organized, came in large numbers. They proposed statutes, which were, in fact, a reproduction of their own; and on the whole, the two meetings convoked by Chalain served only to increase the number of the adherents of the Republican Federation, which was thenceforward known as the Central Committee.

Apart from the Federation, and consequently from the Central Committee, there existed at this date a body of delegates who took the name of the Federal Republican Committee. This consisted at first merely of the majors, who met to

discuss the question of pay: but officers of all ranks joined, and after a short time the association took a political form. The meetings took place at the house of Lemardelay, under the presidency of the Count du Bisson, who had first been a colonel in Cabrera's army, and afterwards a general in that of Ferdinand II. The Count was a Legitimist until the age of sixty, but we shall presently find him figuring as a general under the Commune. The Central Committee, who wanted to govern alone, and who had turned Commandant Lemaître's proposal and the meetings brought about by Chalain to their own advantage, proposed a coalition.

After several conferences, delegates were named on both sides: Bergeret, Bourdier, Chouteau, Courtry, Pindy, Varlin, and Viart, for the Central Committee; and for the Federal Committee, Raoul du Bisson, Jaclard, Tribalet, Garcin, Grêlier, and a sub-lieutenant whose name has not been discovered; and an agreement was concluded. At a general meeting on the 3rd March, it was decided that the title "Republican Federation of the National Guard" should be revived. The complete title of the famous Central Committee was thenceforth the Central Committee of the Republican Federation of the National Guard. It retained the premises which it then occupied in the Rue de la

Corderie, and the meetings at the house of Lemardelay were discontinued. On the 3rd March, it adopted, almost without discussion, statutes in ten articles, of which the following are the chief:—

"The Republican Federation of the National Guard.

"Preliminary declaration. The Republic being the only Government, cannot by right of justice be subordinate to universal suffrage, which is its own work.

"The National Guard has an absolute right to nominate all its chiefs, and to dismiss them so soon as they have lost the confidence of those who elected them. . .

"1st Article. The Republican Federation of the National Guard, is organized as follows:—

"1st. The general assembly of delegates;

"2nd. Clubs of the battalions.

"3rd. The Council of the legion.

"4th. The Central Committee.

"2nd Article. The general assembly is formed by:

"1st. A delegate elected for that purpose in each company without distinction of rank;

"2nd. An officer from each battalion, elected by the officers.

"3rd. The Major.

"The delegates, whomsoever they may be,

may be dismissed by those who have nominated them.

"3rd Article. The Club of each battalion is formed by:

"1st. The delegate of the general assembly;

"2nd. Two delegates from each company, elected without distinction of rank:

"3rd. The officer delegated to the general assembly;

"4th. The Major.

"4th Article. The Council of the legion is formed by:

"1st. Three delegates from each of the clubs of the battalions, elected without distinction of rank;

"2nd. The majors of the arrondissement.

"5th Article. The Central Committee is formed by:

"1st. Three delegates from each arrondissement, elected without distinction of rank by the Council of the legion.

"2nd. A major from each legion, deputed by his colleagues."

The 5th Article charged the Committees, among other functions, "to prevent any attempt which might have for its object the overthrow of the Republic, and to draw up a plan for the complete reorganization of the national forces."

In addition to these statutes, the meeting proposed the following resolution to the Committee: "In case, as certain rumours tend to make us believe, the seat of Government should be removed to some place other than Paris, the city of Paris shall at once constitute itself an independent Republic."

Nearly two hundred and fifteen battalions joined the Federation, and sent their delegates with reports in due form, bearing the signatures of the sergeant-majors, to a meeting which took place at the Vaux-Hall on the 13th March. At this meeting the statutes were put in action, by the election of the principal chiefs of the National Guard. Garibaldi was appointed to be general, Lullier colonel of the artillery, Jaclard and Fallot majors.

Thus the Central Committee is associated, by its origin, with the whole revolutionary and social movement since the election of 1864. It absorbs the former Vigilance Committee—which was also called the Central Committee and the Republican Federation of the National Guard, and which published red placards during the siege—the Provisional or Central Committee of the National Guard, founded on the 15th February at the instigation of Chalain and several citizens of the 15th arrondissement, and the Federal Re-

publican Committee, a meeting of officers which took place at the house of Lemardelay under the presidency of Raoul du Bisson. It receives a regular organization at the two meetings of the 3rd and 13th March. It is the product of an election in four stages, with this distinction, that the electors of the intermediate stages, remain formed into circles and committees, subordinate to the Central Committee, and transmitting its orders to the 215 federate battalions. It has been said that this Central Committee, which effected the revolution of the 18th March, was composed of unknown men; unknown or not, its members were invested with formidable powers, and had been accustomed, for a long time to their exercise. The 31st October, and the 22nd January were not so completely unexpected as has been supposed. These revolts were suppressed with great difficulty; they were suppressed, however, owing to causes which it is important to recall, precisely because they had ceased to exist at the epoch with which we are now dealing.

In the first place, the final organization of the revolutionary forces by the formation of a single Central Committee does not date further back than the General Assemblies of the 15th February, and the 3rd and 13th March.

In the second place, until the capitulation, all

the battalions belonging to the party of order were at the full strength of their effective force, and they more than counterbalanced that of the revolutionary party.

In the third place, the army of Paris properly so-called, the regular army, the Line, obeyed the Government.

In the fourth place, during the siege the enemy had to be faced, there existed the sense of a great patriotic duty to be fulfilled, hopes of victory were still cherished, the disgrace of capitulation, and disarmament had not been incurred.

We have just seen how the revolutionary forces had increased since the termination of the siege. It will be easy to show that the resisting forces had decreased in proportion.

So soon as the gates of Paris were opened, all those who had the means of leaving the city hastened to rejoin their families. The report made by the Staff of the National Guard states that, "sixty thousand of the steadiest, the most trustworthy of the National Guards, of those whose interest it naturally is to preserve order, have left Paris since the communications have been reopened." The proportion between conservatives and revolutionists in the ranks of the National Guard was entirely changed during the course of the month of February, and this explains, without

going back to moral causes, why the call to arms in what were termed the "good" quarters of the city, did not produce any appreciable result on the 24th February, the 1st March, or especially on the 18th March. This departure *en masse*, was, under such circumstances, more than abdication, it was almost complicity. M. Jules Favre has asked forgiveness both of God and men for having worked so hard to hinder the disarmament of the National Guard; he needs no pardon, first, because the disarmament was impossible at the date when he preserved us from it; and, secondly, because the National Guard might have been allowed to retain their arms without any danger, if only the men who saved the Government on the 31st October had remained at their post.

Their desertion, is not, however, to be explained only by their desire to return to their families, to put their affairs in order, to seek health under a more clement sky. While the revolutionary party was advancing towards the Commune, its adversaries did not know whither they were drifting. Among these adversaries, the Monarchists were aware of their own powerlessness, which did not arise solely from the divisions among themselves; the Republicans were angry and disheartened. Although the result of the siege, which had lasted beyond all hope, had

been foreseen, very few among the most sensible and enlightened Republicans, would consent to acknowledge that the Government had but yielded to an inevitable necessity in giving up Paris; and even if they had forgiven the capitulation, they could not forgive the language that had been used during the conflict, to excite the courage of the combatants, and sustain that of the suffering inhabitants. The Government was charged with the whole responsibility of the defeat; according to the fanatics it had betrayed the country, according to the moderate party it had been incapable. Three hundred thousand men armed, the fortifications completed, cannon cast, the provisioning of the city, revolts suppressed, order maintained; all this was laid to the credit of the population: the Government was credited with defeat only. M. Gambetta alone retained his prestige; but M. Gambetta no longer formed part of the Government; he had taken no share in the capitulation. The majority of the Assembly at Bordeaux was monarchical; it had placed M. Thiers at the head of the Government; M. Thiers who had served King Louis Philippe for eighteen years with incomparable ability. How could they feel that the Republic was safe with such a chief, and such an Assembly? More than one Republican, who was neither a socialist nor a revolutionist, hesitated.

They asked themselves whether in fighting for order they should not be fighting for a dynasty also.

The Assembly evinced distrust of Paris which some of its members carried to the length of hostility. The deputies had been styled "rustics,"[1] an uncalled-for taunt; but they were at least provincials, and quite determined to submit no longer to the sway of Paris; M. Thiers, who could do almost anything with them, did not even attempt the impossible task of taking them back to the Palais-Bourbon; all that his influence and eloquence could obtain, was that Versailles rather than Fontainebleau should be chosen for the meeting of the Assembly. Thus, as the reward of her courage during five months of siege, Paris was declared "suspect" and lost her rank as the capital of France! In addition to these grievances the majority of the inhabitants had heavy domestic cares.

The workmen, who had nothing to live on and keep their families but their pay, for the workshops were shut, were afraid of losing that last resource now that peace was made, and the small trades people, who had for the last six months been spending money, but making none, lacked funds and courage to reopen their shops or workshops, without customers, without capital, and even, in many

[1] Ruraux.

cases, without implements, for all had been ruined and destroyed. The impossibility of gaining a livelihood was trifling, so to speak, in comparison with the impossibility of paying former debts, of the preservation of commercial honour.' House-rents were due, arrears had not been paid up, a remission of payment was demanded; even moderate and sensible persons, who were aware that the Assembly could not sacrifice the rights of the proprietors, asked, at least, for a long delay. They would tax their ingenuity to the utmost; they would borrow money, and practise the most rigid economy; but pay at once they could not. It was the same with commercial bills. The Government of Defence had granted a delay; but its term had now expired, and an act was required to meet this emergency. The Assembly, in its sitting of the 10th March, at Bordeaux, had voted an act, the principal clause of which was as follows: "All commercial bills due from the 13th August to the 12th November, 1870, shall be payable seven months from either date after maturity, with all interest thereon, after the date of such maturity. Bills of the 13th November to the 12th April next, shall be payable from either date, from the 13th June to the 12th of July, with all interest thereon, from the date of first maturity." This enact-

ment revealed ignorance of the true extent of the evil. The bills of the 13th August, 1870, became due on the 13th March, 1871, the very day of the promulgation of the act. No one was in a position to meet them. Communications were not re-established between Paris and the departments, the branch offices of the Bank were not open, commercial transactions were impossible, bills could not be discounted. From the 13th to the 17th March more than 150,000 bills were protested in Paris, and if the law had been carried out to the letter, there would have been 40,000 bankruptcies. Representations were made on all sides, from Lille, Rouen, and Havre. A petition had been signed by the bureaus of sixty syndical chambers in Paris, representing 7000 traders. In the interest even of the creditor, which does not lie in incurring useless expense, but in obtain security for his loan, a longer delay was indispenable. This was not understood until later; the act was reconstructed on the 27th April, under less stringent conditions; but on the 10th March, the Assembly had lacked foresight. The question of house-rents was not even raised at Bordeaux, but it was a burning one in all the places which had been the theatre of war, and above all in Paris, where the siege had lasted five months, and where rents are so high. When, at the

sitting of the 20th March, M. Tirard was questioned upon the cause of the inaction of the National Guard of the 2nd arrondissement, during the 17th and 18th March, he replied without hesitation that it was the act relating to commercial bills. Nearly every one in Paris was threatened with some misfortune; the workmen with losing their pay as national guards, without finding work; lodgers with being turned out, and having their furniture seized; commercial men with bankruptcy. It is sad to relate, but nevertheless true, that at the conclusion of the peace, it was Paris which had the most to suffer, after Alsace and Lorraine. The great city which had undergone bombardment, famine, and the ravages of an epidemic without surrendering, and whose walls were intact, was condemned to submit to the insult of occupation by the enemy. It seemed as though everything were to be done that could dishearten the prudent, and exasperate the violent.

The profound emotion, mingled with shame and anger, that had been caused by the capitulation, grew stronger and deeper. It did not lead to insurrection at first, no one would give the name of insurrection to processions of drunken workmen and soldiers, shouting treachery and breathing vengeance against the Prussians and the Govern-

ment. The revictualling of the city, and the approaching elections were then absorbing all minds. During the short electoral period which immediately ensued the violence of the clubs knew no bounds. The attacks upon property and upon the bourgeoisie were as vehement as those upon the Government of National Defence. Electoral committees were formed on all sides, and in prodigious numbers. A marvellous number of candidates offered themselves. So numerous were competitors and so widely scattered were the votes, that several days were consumed in the reckoning, 545,600 electors having taken part in the ballot.

It is equally painful and instructive to read the electoral placards. Some of them are perverse, some grotesque; a few, happily, are bold and spirited. Here is one which might well have been inspired by the notorious Central Committee. It is printed on red paper:—

"Central Committee,
Revolutionary and Socialist,
of the clubs and electoral committees of the
twenty arrondissements of Paris.

"Whereas Paris did not, as has been said, surrender in order to avoid famine;

"Whereas the conduct of the Government of National Defence has been, since the 4th of Sep-

tember, a succession of falsehoods and of cowardly and infamous acts;

"Whereas the Government had no right to transact any capitulation;

"The deputies sent to Bordeaux ought:

"1st. To impeach this Government;

"2nd. To demand war, and resign rather than enter into any treaty of peace."

This placard is signed by Raoul Rigault, Lavalette, Tanguy, and Varlet. A list follows of forty-three recommended candidates, all of whom, with three or four exceptions, afterwards made part of the Commune.

The names of members of the Government were to be found in some of the lists, according to the caprice of those who had drawn them up. The Government had not made any collective list, any profession of political faith, or taken any measures. The Liberal (moderate) committee, whose president was M. Dufaure, had systematically excluded them, not, he said, because he was hostile, but to avoid weakening their authority by mixing up their names in electoral discussions. "The names of the members of the National Defence do not figure upon our list. The committee beg to state that the omission must not be taken for condemnation or blame, but as an act of political foresight."

"The honourable personages whom we omit were called to the Government of Paris and of France, on the 4th September, by necessity: on the 3rd November, by the immense majority in Paris; it was understood between them and those who gave them their authority, that it was to be exercised by them until it should be confided to other hands by a National Assembly. Their authority must be maintained all the more strictly as the close of its tenure approaches; and the committee are of opinion, that it might come out of an electoral contest, in which the members of the Government would be engaged, weakened or compromised.

"In the name of the Committee,

"DUFAURE, President."

This act of "political foresight" did not save the members of the Government from vehement abuse. When the contest was ended by the proclamation of the returns, the Assembly was in existence, and the authority of the Government, for which their own party had shown so much solicitude, had no longer scope for its exercise. Moreover, it is probable enough that even the support of their friends, if it had been given, would not have saved them from a defeat, which was noisily hailed by the socialists as a condemnation and a "mark of contempt." M. Jules

Favre, who was elected together with Messieurs Dorian and Gambetta, believed, on the 10th February, that the members of the Government of Paris would neither be elected at Paris nor elsewhere. He wrote to M. Jules Simon on the 10th, at eleven p.m., "The confusion has been so great that the counting is not yet finished; but so far, it is certain that not one member of the Government has been elected. This makes our position a very difficult one. However, we shall try to get out of it. We will stay at our posts so long as it is necessary, doing all we can to hasten the meeting of the Assembly and facilitate its setting to work. At the present moment, the most important matter is to obtain a prolongation of the armistice from Count Bismarck. I shall see him to-morrow for that purpose, and I am not without uneasiness as to the impression the ballot in Paris may have made upon him."

The list of elected candidates was not published in the *Journal Officiel* until the 18th February. MM. Louis Blanc, Victor Hugo, Gambetta, Garibaldi, and Quinet were at the head. M. Louis Blanc had 216,530 votes; M. Edgar Quinet, 199,472. M. Rochefort came after him, with 165,670 votes. Some of the generals who had distinguished themselves during the siege figured

among the forty-three elected candidates: Admirals Saisset, and Pothuau, and General Frébault. The Government of Bordeaux was represented by M. Gambetta only, that of Paris by Messieurs Jules Favre and Dorian. M. Dorian was elected by 128,480 votes; M. Jules Favre came in thirty-fourth, with 81,722 votes. M. Thiers (103,226 votes) was only twentieth. There were a few moderate republicans; M. Henri Martin, M. Vacherot, M. Sauvage, M. Littré, M. Leon Say, and two or three others. The future members of the Commune were MM. Delescluze (154,142 votes), Felix Pyat, Gambon, Ranc, Malon, and Cournet. Paris had elected, besides, MM. Rochefort and Razoua; and lastly, MM. Lockroy, Clémenceau, Floquet, and Millière, who, though they did not belong in any way to the Commune, sent in their resignation after the commencement of hostilities.

The revictualling of the city went on rapidly, but still too slowly for the needs of a city of two millions of over excited inhabitants, who were suffering from hunger and cold, and excited by so many causes. London contributed to what may be called the salvage of Paris with promptitude and generosity which Paris will never forget. M. Jules Favre, in his fine work *Le Gouvernement de la Défence Nationale*, states that

the Prussians willingly facilitated the arrival of provisions, and that Count Bismarck gave all he had at his disposal, which represented subsistence for us for a day and a half. General Vinoy affirms, on the contrary, that, on the 3rd February, the enemy, being apprised of M. Gambetta's proclamation against the conclusion of the armistice, stopped the convoys of provisions everywhere on their way to Paris. "Nevertheless," adds the general, "they afterwards consented to withdraw a prohibition which, if it had been kept in force a few hours longer, might have led to deplorable consequences."

The general's words are, "a few *hours* longer," not, *a day* longer; and in truth Paris was reduced to counting by hours. The provisions which, according to Raoul Rigault and the hostile journals, were stored in abundance in the city at the moment of capitulation, were in fact so limited, that the inhabitants were kept on rations until the 10th February, and it was feared that they would literally want bread.

The railroads were broken up, their bridges were shattered, their rolling stock dispersed or useless, and their staffs disorganized. Even the river had been barred above and below Rouen by sunken vessels and torpedoes; it would take time and labour to render it navigable once

more. The *Journal Officiel* states that the first train laden with flour, from Rennes, arrived on the 3rd February, at three o'clock, at the Western station (Saint-Lazare). The same day the Orleans line brought 248 bullocks from Cholet, and three waggons of hay. The first consignment from the London committee also arrived by the Northern line. It consisted of condensed milk, cheese, bacon, Liebig's extract of meat, water biscuits, soup, preserves, &c. On the 4th February, a train from Lille brought 6000 cwts. of flour and a waggon-load of coals. From that time the arrivals succeeded each other without interruption. But the purchase of provisions in their places of production was slow; the passage of the armies had impoverished and devastated the country. M. Magnin went to Dieppe to expedite the proceedings.

The farmers in the neighbourhood of Paris had set up a market at the bridge of Neuilly; crowds rushed thither, and there were serious disturbances, only too easily explained by the general suffering. The ordinary peace-officers did not suffice to put these disturbances down; and recourse was had to the gendarmerie, who could not be employed so near the outposts without permission from the Prussians. Almost all the railroads were available for traffic; but there were

2,000,000 mouths to be fed. The requisition of corn and flour had been stopped on the 7th February in the expectation of more rapid arrivals. On the 12th February, Belleville was almost destitute of bread; the bakers having received only 325 sacks of flour instead of 800. The last sacks were distributed on the morning of the 13th; other provisions were totally exhausted. Providentially, that very day, the 13th February, the arrivals of flour, which had been very slack on the ten preceding days, were numerous, and the quantity of flour was large enough to put an end to all apprehension. One cannot think, without a shudder, of the calamities the delay of one more day must have occasioned. A week later the markets of the town had almost resumed their usual aspect. Paris had food again; the Central Committee was waiting for this moment to appear upon the scene.

It was in fact, as will be remembered, on the 15th February, that the appeal to the National Guard was issued by the inhabitants of the 15th arrondissement, and that the negotiations for uniting the different committees in one single federation commenced. On the 16th, while the Assembly was nominating its bureau, General Clément Thomas, feeling that his influence with the National Guard was gone, as the men were given up to their

committees, and not wishing to retain a sham authority, resigned his functions. General Vinoy, who was commanding the army of Paris, was provisionally appointed to the command of the National Guard. This choice was far from being a popular one. "He is a senator of the Empire!" was said at the meetings. There was no less outcry against General Valentin, who was made Prefect of Police, and against his gendarmes. The appointment of M. Thiers produced great anger, for he was regarded as a Monarchist; and a similar feeling was aroused by the presence of three members of the Government of Defence in the new Government. M. Thiers thought to satisfy the National Guard by giving the command to M. d'Aurelles de Paladines. He wrote to M. Jules Simon on the 24th February,—

"M. Jules Favre, M. Picard, and I, have made a choice, of which I hope you will approve, for the command of the National Guard of Paris. We were told the measure was urgently necessary, and we were certainly told the truth. I have the consent of General Vinoy, who conducts himself marvellously well here, and has the confidence of all. The choice of which I speak is that of General d'Aurelles de Paladines, who is much esteemed everywhere, and particularly here, because he alone gained an in-

contestable advantage at Coulmiers. He has consented upon reflection, but on one condition, that he is not to take the command until after the solution of a question which is occupying every one here, the passage of the Prussians through Paris. The question is not solved, and the proposals of the journals, the manifestations of certain of our friends, are far from facilitating its solution. The opinion of competent persons is that the question is not so grave as it is made out to be. But the bravado on a certain side is irritating Prussian *amour-propre* to the highest pitch, and embarrassing us greatly.

"We, Jules Favre, Picard, and I, should have much liked to have been able to consult you upon the choice of General d'Aurelles, but we were obliged to make up our minds, the urgency being made evident here, and the local authorities pressing us, by declaring that Paris was left ungoverned. They were greatly reassured by the hope of a wise selection: above all, the candidate is irreproachable, and is in Paris, on the scene of action."

M. Thiers deceived himself in thinking the appointment of General d'Aurelles would be well received. The battle of Coulmiers was forgotten, while D'Aurelles de Paladines was remembered as the general whom M. Gambetta had dismissed.

Any other choice would have been received with equal disfavour. The National Guard wanted to elect their own chief, all their chiefs, and declared through their committee, that they had "the absolute right" to do so. On the 18th February, the enemy, who were in possession of the forts, wheeled the guns round so as to direct all the artillery upon the enceinte, in case peace should not be concluded. This superfluous and untimely demonstration excited great indignation, not against the Prussians, but against the Government of Defence, "who had given us up," and against the Assembly, its accomplice in treason. The people must always have a victim and an idol. In February its victim was the Government of Defence. They were so angry with the Government that they forgot to hate the Prussians. One measure of economy, in itself wise, was very ill received. On the 19th, the pay of one franc and a half, until then allowed to all workmen serving in the National Guard, ceased to be granted as of right by the family councils of the companies. To obtain it, a man had to make his demand in writing, and to prove that it was not possible for him to get work. At the same time it was rumoured in the battalions that the Prussians were to enter Paris, and that the Assembly was going to transfer the seat of Government elsewhere. The com-

mercial bills act gave offence; that on house-rents, which was impatiently expected, was not under discussion.

The agitation in the populous quarters, Belleville and Montmartre, increased; noisy and threatening crowds paraded the streets. The 24th February seemed opportune for a grand demonstration. In a meeting held at the Vaux Hall, it was decided that the federated battalions should march, under arms, to the column of July, shouting, *Vive la République!* On the same occasion, two important resolutions were taken: the first was in these terms, "The National Guard, through the medium of their Central Committee, protest against all attempt at disarming them, and declare that they will resist it, if necessary, by arms." The second resolution, adopted in spite of the strong protest of the reasonable portion of the meeting, was that the delegates should submit the following proposal to their companies:—"At the moment when the Prussians enter Paris, the National Guard shall go forward to meet them, and oppose an armed resistance." The precise day of the enemy's entry was not known; it was generally thought it would be the 27th. Meanwhile numbers might be counted by a pacific demonstration on the 24th. The watch-word was immediately given at the clubs.

On the 24th, the concourse round the column of July was considerable. Soldiers and sailors were to be seen in the crowd. The peace-officers who were on duty, unarmed, were hooted and hissed; that day, however, passed over without any incident of graver importance.

The morning of the next day was tolerably quiet. It was about two o'clock when the crowd began to collect. At three nearly 3000 persons were counted in the square. The deputations from the National Guard carried wreaths of *immortelles*. Some came in corps, headed by their officers, and preceded by bugles or drums. The arrival of 2000 men of the Garde Mobile of the Seine was hailed with loud acclamations; buglers sounded the charge from the platform of the column. A battalion of light infantry, with the number 137 on their képis, marched in. The crowd was more turbulent and ill-disposed than on the day before. In the evening the excitement rose high. Several well-dressed women were pursued; the peace-officers were compelled to hide themselves. The crowd did not disperse until ten o'clock.

Two deplorable incidents marked this day, the 26th February. At one o'clock the red flag was hoisted upon the column of July, at three o'clock a police agent in plain clothes, named Vincenzini,

was recognized and pursued. He fled as fast as his legs could carry him, but was caught upon the quay, seized by artillery-men, sailors, and light infantry, and dragged to the parapet. "Throw him into the water!" cried the mob, among which were numbers of women. He was tied to a plank and thrown into the river. The plank floated and the unhappy man begged for mercy, but he was stoned to death.

The Central Committee had succeeded in reckoning its forces; it had, so to speak, held a review of them on the Place de la Bastille. It now turned its attention to another object: the battalions had only muskets, and very few cartridges; the Committee wanted to give them ammunition and artillery; and for that the entry of the Prussians furnished a pretext. The Committee had probably perceived the absurdity of attempting a conflict with the Prussian army from the first, but intended to profit by the agitation to complete the armament of the future insurrection. The idea thrown out at the Vaux Hall meeting had been ardently taken up, and during the last two days of February nothing was thought of but fighting. Cannon "belonging to the National Guard, for they had paid for them with their own money" by voluntary subscriptions during the siege, were posted at Neuilly, and in

the Avenue de Wagram, on the route which the Prussians were to follow.

"Impossible to let them be taken by the enemy!" this was the uppermost idea in all the battalions. The tocsin was rung by order of the Central Committee, and the companies proceeded at once to place "the people's artillery" in safety. They met with no resistance. The artillery-men in charge of the cannon lent a willing hand to the work. At six o'clock in the evening, the first comers harnessed themselves to the guns, and began to drag them towards the faubourgs, crossing the Place de la Bastille, which was still crowded. The cannon thus captured were placed in the Place des Vosges, at Belleville, at the Buttes-Chaumont, at Charonne, at La Villette, and at Montmartre. The despatches sent to M. Thiers by the generals during the night were alarming:—

"9.20 p.m.

"They are beating to quarters in Belleville; the battalions are getting under arms."

"11.40 p.m.

"Two thousand of the National Guard, armed and provided with cartridges, are assembled on the boulevard of Belleville; the drummers say the rendezvous is Place du Château d'Eau. Orders are given by the Central Committee, which is sitting in the Rue de la Corderie."

"11.50 p.m.

"The park of artillery at La Muette has been carried off, the guns are being taken to the Trocadéro and the Champ de Mars. The meeting of La Marseillaise has resolved to oppose the entry of the Prussians by force, and is awaiting orders from the Central Committee at the Rue de la Corderie."

"11 50 p.m.

"The battalions are assembling under arms, and say they intend to oppose the entry of the Prussians. The excitement is great; the movement is essentially patriotic, and directed solely against the enemy. The prolongation of the armistice will suspend this movement; but it will certainly be revived if the Prussians enter Paris. Is there not real danger in this, and would it not be well to take it into account in the negotiations?"

This is on the 26th February, from the general commanding the sixth zone to M. Thiers. M. Thiers had arrived at Paris on the 20th; between the 20th and the 26th he had negotiated the peace with Count Bismarck; the supplementary convention regulating the entry of the Prussians into Paris bears date the 26th. The negotiators had not failed to warn Count Bismarck; they knew, only too well, the disordered state Paris was in; he himself was disturbed,

but he declared that he was unable to resist the will of the Prussian army on this point. M. Thiers had to set out for Bordeaux on the 27th, there to face the conflicts of the Assembly, not knowing but that Paris might be deluged with blood. The processions, begun on the 24th February, lasted until the 1st March. That the National Guard would oppose the entry of the Prussians by a regular battle was neither probable nor possible; a partial attack, one isolated act of folly, would, however, be enough to bring about a catastrophe.

The carrying off of the cannon by the federate battalions was completed during the 27th and 28th February. The authorities were unable to prevent this, for they had no longer any forces at their disposal, but they endeavoured to obtain that each battalion should only take those guns which it had given, hoping, by this means, to save the cannon formerly given by the wealthy quarters; but the Central Committee would not permit the non-federal battalions to have any artillery. It employed itself with perseverance, and not without intelligence, in accumulating engines of war and ammunition. It instigated the crowd, which was acting at random, to pillage the bastions and the powder factories, for the purpose of procuring powder and ball. The

Committee ordered their muskets to be taken from custom-house officials and the collectors of the town-dues (*octroi*), at their posts, and at the railway stations where they were quartered.

The general commanding the second zone, having tried to oppose this pillage, was arrested and kept under ward.

The Prefect of Police to the General-in-chief.

"February 27th, 7 a.m.

"The general commanding the second zone is a prisoner there, the telegraph wires have been cut; the National Guards, wherever they show themselves, advance the same pretext; they want cartridges, that they may oppose the entry of the Prussians."

The Central Committee was making ready for war, but not for war upon the Prussians. Ammunition marked 7 was placed with pieces of the same calibre, and cartridges for chassepots were divided from cartridges for breech-loaders. The keys of the powder-magazines were taken, by violence if necessary. The guns of bastion 36 were replaced upon their carriages, in violation of the fifth clause of the convention. A battery of six pieces was set before the gate of La Chapelle. For the protection of the artillery collected upon the heights of Montmartre, the Committee had

ordered barricades to be erected in all the neighbouring streets. So little did it conceal its presence and its authority, that two officers who presented themselves before the general commanding the quarter, to demand ammunition, produced a written order by the Central Committee. The movement, being spread over the whole city, was necessarily irregular, but the traces of a guiding authority were clearly to be recognized: the Central Committee was making, according to its fashion, order by disorder.

The nights of the 27th and 28th were not more tranquil than the days. During the night of the 27th, several bands, each composed of about 500 men, flocked to the Place de la Concorde and up the Champs Elysées, because it was believed the enemy were coming. General Vinoy estimates these bands at 3000 men; he says that, on the night of the 27th, 8000 armed men were continually afoot in the different quarters of Paris.

No murder except that of Vincenzini is recorded. Three Prussians were recognized in a carriage, in the Rue Turbigo, and pursued by the crowd, amidst cries of, "To the water!" An officer saved them, by taking upon himself to conduct them to the Central Committee, in the Rue de la Corderie. At the railway stations there were

serious disturbances, besides the carrying off of the muskets. The trains were ransacked and sent back. The workmen belonging to the Northern railway, to the number of 1100, were stopped, as they came up to their workshops, and made to work at the barricades and at mounting the cannon. The meeting held at La Marseillaise had appointed a certain Darras General-in-chief of the National Guard; he was scarcely heard of afterwards. A more serious matter was the liberation of Brunel and Piazza, who had been locked up at Sainte-Pélagie since the 22nd February, and who were chaired by the crowd. They afterwards became personages of importance in the army of the Commune.

On reading of these occurrences, it is impossible not to ask oneself, what were the authorities doing? Everywhere complaints were made of their weakness, and they are bitterly reproached with it still. What a mistake it was to let the cannon be taken! No one asks whether the authorities had any means of preventing the seizure. The authorities were weak, no doubt; the question is, were they so through their own fault or through that of their position? M. Ernest Picard, the Minister of the Interior, was a man of great decision of character and of stout heart; M. Jules Ferry had proved, on two memorable

occasions, that he could brave peril both to his person and his popularity; General Vinoy, the Governor-General of Paris, is an energetic officer who likes fighting without quarter better than submission. But what can a few stout-hearted men do, when they are completely disarmed? The authorities, who found themselves confronted by the Central Committee and the Federals, knew, as others before them had known, all the horrors of civil war during the siege; and in the then state of the National Guard and the army, they felt they could not attempt vigorous measures without running the risk of a civil war, in which they should get the worst of it.

Those battalions of the National Guard which were called "good," worn out by the siege, overwhelmed with grief and shame at the capitulation, reassured but slightly by the composition of the Government, decimated, moreover, by the departure of 60,000 men of their effective strength for the departments, did not respond, or responded in only insignificant numbers to the repeated call to arms.

It has been said that the National Guards did not come, because they had been refused a sufficient quantity of ammunition. The distribution of cartridges was made with caution, because it was not desirable either to waste them or give

them to suspected persons. Who has ever imagined that if the National Guard had come forward, all the ammunition at command would not have been distributed to them? We must not palter with history. The truth is, that, at this time, three parts of the National Guard were infected with a spirit of mutiny, and the rest were utterly disheartened. If the correctness of this proportion between the good battalions and the bad is denied, it is because the number who were absent is forgotten. The cadres of even the orderly battalions were disorganized.

The two or three men who alone represented the Government of Paris, did not, themselves, know how utterly the National Guard would fail them. They believed, up to the last moment, that the men would rouse themselves when they understood the magnitude of the danger. They were not aware of the enormous number of absentees, and this was the most serious evil. It was thoughtless and unpatriotic desertion, at the moment of the greatest danger, which gave the victory to the Central Committee, and soon after to the Commune.

During the occupation of the Champs Elysées by the Prussians, the Government endeavoured by beat of drum to rally round them a cordon of the National Guards; but no one appeared.

High pay was offered, but in vain. Yet the "good" battalions were still believed in. On the day of the evacuation, when the Gobelins was seriously threatened on account of a considerable quantity of ammunition stored in the manufactory, and which the Central Committee wanted to seize, M. Jules Favre would not have recourse to the troops of the line, for he still relied "upon the good battalions." M. Thiers, on being consulted by telegraph, was of the same mind. He replied, from Bordeaux, "It is impossible but that the National Guard will interpose, at the proper time, and put an end to the disturbances which disquiet us." Some days later, on the 17th March, during the whole of the afternoon and part of the night, the drums beat to arms in those quarters which were most favourable to order; but there was no response. This resource, the good National Guard, the best of all, for it had often put an end to insurrections by its mere presence, now utterly failed the authorities.

The "guardians of the peace," as they had been called since the 4th September, formerly called "serjents de ville," had been formed into regiments during the war; they made up a body of some importance. But they had been disarmed, like the rest of the army, since the armistice, and

they were, besides, objects of an especial hatred to the population of the suburbs; they could not show themselves in a crowd without being insulted, chased, and ill-treated. Their number was not great enough to oppose to armed bands. It would have been impossible for them to make an arrest, and especially to arrest the leaders of the movement, protected and defended as they were by body-guards who allowed no one to approach them.

As for the army, there were two different phases in its position. Up to the 15th March, the army of Paris, that which had arms, at least, consisted of 15,000 men (Faron's division and the gendarmes). The other soldiers in Paris were those who had fought during the siege, and had just been disarmed according to the terms of the armistice. The total of the effective strength was 243,000 men. Deducting the 12,000 of Faron's division, and the 3000 gendarmes who had kept their arms, they may be said to have formed a mass of about 225,000 men; a mass, not an army, a mass, moreover, in process of dissolution, since it included 103,000 gardes mobiles, men engaged for the period of the war, discharged soldiers who had been recalled, and those who would be exempt from service early in 1871. The latter, whose time of service had now nearly expired, were so far from

trustworthy, that it was of great importance for the maintenance of order they should be disbanded as quickly as possible. The mobiles of the Seine, especially, no longer obeyed their superiors. More than that, they had taken to arresting them and bringing them as prisoners before the Central Committee, which, for the most part, released them. The 20,000 mobiles of the Seine were quickly disbanded, but not much was gained by the arrangement, for they stayed in Paris. The others were sent off, as soon as possible, either on foot, passing through the enemy's lines, or by rail, so soon as the railroads were reopened. This difficult operation was completed on the 14th March. The men of the active army entitled to be discharged were also disbanded at the same time; the former army of Paris vanished; but, just in time, came a new one sent by M. Thiers, at the urgent request of General Vinoy, and with the authorization of the Prussians, who comprehended the absolute necessity of letting the third article of the preliminaries of peace lie dormant.

This army, consisting of 4420 infantry and a division of cavalry, arrived in Paris with the men belonging to it who were entitled to be discharged, and who had to be sent off to their homes at once. In consequence of this, the

effective strength of the companies, already incomplete, was still further reduced; and the regiments were more like corps in process of formation than regiments already formed. An effort was made to place them upon a proper footing, by amalgamating them with the former regiments bearing the same number, according as the latter came back from captivity. This difficult operation, during which an army can only exist upon paper, was not concluded by the 17th March. The new arrivals encountered the mobiles of the Seine and all the discharged soldiers of the former army of Paris, who had not yet returned to their departments, or who had been domiciled in Paris before the war. There was a great number of them: they turned up in all the insurrections, where they appeared in the képi, and red trousers, and where their presence was always greeted with hearty acclamations. Even before they were discharged, it had been necessary to billet them upon the inhabitants, so as to restore the schools, colleges, and palaces, which had been turned into barracks during the siege, to the public administration. To these discharged soldiers must be added a swarm of francs-tireurs and foreign volunteers, who were adventurers rather than soldiers, and who found their opportunity in scenes of disorder. Among surroundings such as these, the regiments,

sent to Paris, and those composing Faron's small division, were perilously placed: all these men, who were soldiers no longer and yet had not taken up their former trades, were an incessant cause of demoralization to their comrades in the active army. Certainly, an army commanded by men such as Generals Vinoy and Faron, was in vigorous hands; but it had neither cohesion, party spirit, nor discipline. The disarmed and the discharged men soon turned the army to the side of the Federals, who shouted: "Vive la ligne!" as they passed along. They had in themselves a powerful incentive to insurrection; for, if the Central Committee and its adherents were actuated by secret political intentions, the greater number of those who made the demonstrations were inspired by nothing more than anger against the Prussians, and pride in the flag and the name of France: sentiments which were as powerful in the hearts of the soldiers as in those of the citizens. All the generals felt themselves powerless, as their despatches testify. "Do you wish us to resist? I am not sure of my men." Or again, "I do not know what my men may do;" or else, "These disturbances are serious, and I have no means of putting them down." General Vinoy, determined to know the worst, held a review: the attitude of the soldiers was

threatening; they were within a hair's-breadth of mutiny. The General-in-chief was so little in a condition to resist, that towards the middle of March he fell back with his troops towards the centre. It often happened, that when a general commanding a zone would send a detachment of soldiers to prevent the carrying off of cannon or the pillage of armouries, the men would not march; or that even on the spot, they would not obey orders, or they would fraternize openly with the Federals. There were honourable, even splendid exceptions; gendarmes and soldiers who let themselves be imprisoned so long as the Commune lasted rather than fight against the French army; some forfeited their lives in this devotion to duty; but the bulk of the army of Paris was rotten. The Communists took pains to mark this, after the 18th March, by their manifestations of delight. "Our brethren of the army would not lay a hand upon the sacred ark of our liberties." This was said publicly. Among themselves, they judged "our brethren of the army," who had given themselves, or been bought, more severely; but these sentiments of contempt, expressed behind closed doors, only afford further proof of the reality and extent of the treachery. It is worth while to give details. One day, after the 18th March, it was asked, at the Hôtel

de Ville, what was to be done with the soldiers? One member proposed that they should be incorporated with the National Guard; another, named Rousseau, set himself energetically against this proposal, saying, "no confidence could be placed in men who had been seen to sell their arms to the first comer for a few pieces of money." To this had the army of Paris come. General Lecomte was killed on the 18th, only because his men deserted him; he was taken by the assassins from amidst his own soldiers.

At a meeting held on the 1st March (the day of the Prussian entry) by the Federal Council of the International Assembly, Ridet makes the following report: "This evening, I had proof that Vinoy is no longer obeyed. The line wants to avoid all conflict with the people. Vinoy sent them to bring away the cannon from the Place Royale. The National Guard refused to give them up. The line did not insist." Babick makes the following reflection: "The influence of these events is considerable, this may be an immense advantage." Since the soldiers disobeyed their general when it was a question of carrying off the guns, it is easy to foresee what would have happened if they had been sent into Belleville or Montmartre, to arrest the leaders of the federation. Even if the formation

of a company of trustworthy and devoted men could have been achieved, it would have been impossible to have effected any arrest without much bloodshed. Who could have exposed Paris to such a danger, at the very moment of the Prussian entry? Not M. Thiers; not MM. Jules Favre and Jules Ferry; and they alone had to represent the Government after the 27th. General Vinoy and all the generals under his command shared this sentiment. It is easy enough, when these events are left far behind, to accuse the authorities of weakness; those who are in the midst of the facts, who can measure the scope of their means of action, who foresee the consequences of defeat, often exhibit more courage in temporizing than would have sufficed for fighting. This was the history of the new Government, in those ill-omened days at the end of February, as it had been that of the Government of Defence during the greater part of the siege of Paris.

The uncertainty which had prevailed respecting the exact day for the entry of the Prussians, had produced, perhaps, a favourable result. Anger had had time to cool, zeal had worn itself out during four days' suspense. A conflict could only result from a moment of blind rage, whose insanity all had recognized on reflection. The

Government was certain that they had not a general engagement to fear, but they dreaded partial disturbances which might serve the enemy as a pretext. The Central Committee, who had probably resolved from the first to submit to the occupation which no one in the world could prevent, but also to take advantage of it to get possession of the cannon and ammunition, and to establish its authority over the federal battalions, posted the following proclamation, on the evening of the 28th, so that it might appear that all the popular movements were directed by the Committee.

"FRENCH REPUBLIC.

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

"Central Committee of the National Guard.

"Citizens,—

"As it appears that the general feeling of the population is against offering any opposition to the entry of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee, which had issued a notice to the contrary, now declare that they have adopted the following resolution :—

"There shall be erected all round those quarters of the city which the enemy is to occupy, a series of barricades so as to isolate that portion of the city completely.

"The inhabitants of the district circumscribed within these limits ought to evacuate it immediately.

"The National Guard, in concert with the army, formed into a cordon, will surround this space, and will take care that the enemy, thus isolated on a soil which forms no longer a portion of our city, shall have no communication whatsoever with the other portions of Paris.

"The Central Committee therefore request all the National Guard to lend their aid in the execution of the measures necessary to effect this purpose, and also to avoid all acts of aggression which would bring about the immediate overthrow of the Republic.

"Paris, the 28th February, 1871.

"The Members of the Commission:

"André Alavoine, Bouit, Froutier, Boursier, David, Boisson, Haroud, Gritz, Tessier, Ramel, Badois, Arnold, Piconnel, Masson, Andoyneau, Weber, Lagarde, Jean Laroque, Jules Bergeret, Pouchain, Lavalette, Fleury, Maljournal, Chouteau, Cadoze, Gasteau, Dutil, Matte, Mutin."

The plan of the Central Committee was, in fact, no other than that of General Vinoy, who on his side had also published a proclamation.

Among the names of members of "the Commission" of the Central Committee we find that of Chouteau, who belonged to the International. The Federal Council of the International had decided, after some hesitation, that four of its members should get themselves delegated by the companies, so as to make part of the Central Committee. These four members were to act in their own names, without compromising the association, but they were to supply it with information, and to be guided by it.

The International Association laid great stress on what it called its moral influence; it wanted to bear a part in everything, and meant to take its share of political action, without, however, allowing politics to be anything but a means of serving its social propaganda.

MM. Lanjalley and Corriez, the authors of a history of the 18th March, assert, that before drawing up the Manifesto of the 28th February, the Central Committee had admitted several members of the Federal Council of the International, under the title of free members, "in order to counterbalance the influence of the violent and unruly element existing in its own body." The Central Committee did not call upon the International to act as moderators. It did not fear its own violence to that extent; it only

did on the 28th what was already intended on the 24th, but it willingly accepted the co-operation of the International, in order to explain and cover the sudden transformation of its policy.

The International, whose directing Committee was composed of very prudent men, was far from any ideas of resistance, as the following document will sufficiently prove :—

"Paris, 28th February.

"Numerous deputations have presented themselves at the Corderie since the entry of the Prussians has been under consideration, and have declared that they expected to find there a military organization quite ready to march against the invaders when they should set foot in Paris.

"The members present having requested the delegates to state what groups they represented, the names of certain citizens were given who have not received any mandate from the Committees constituting the reunion of the Corderie, viz :—

"The International Association of Workmen; the Federal Chamber of the Working Men's Society; the Deputation of the twenty arrondissements.

"Under these circumstances the three groups

of the Corderie inform the workmen of Paris that they have given no mandate to any one on the subject of an action against the Prussians.

"The members present consider it their duty to declare their belief that any attack would but serve to place the people in the power of the enemies of the Revolution, of German and French Monarchists, who would drown all social claims in a sea of blood.

"We remember the dark days of June.

"The Members of the Commission :

"Henri Goullé, Pindy, Jules Vallès, Rochat, Roueyrol, Leo Meillet, Ch. Beslay, Avrial, Antoine Arnoud."

Round that portion of Paris occupied by the Prussians the Government had formed two cordons of troops, one furnished by General Faron's regiments, the second by the National Guard. The National Guard disliked this service, notwithstanding their high pay. The two cordons were broken through by only a few inquisitive persons, especially on the first day. It had been verbally arranged that the Prussians might visit, individually and unarmed, the Louvre and the Invalides ; the Government had consequently ordered all the gates of the Tuileries, of the Place du Carrousel, and of the Court of the Louvre to be shut.

The Louvre was completely closed in by canvas screens, so as to hide Paris from the enemy, and the enemy from the Parisians. In the interior of the town cafés and shops were shut; the greater number bore the following inscription: "Closed on account of the National Mourning." Few, if any carriages; scarcely any one on foot: a dead city. The Bourse was deserted; the kiosks were closed. Thirty-seven newspapers, of the most diverse opinions, had unanimously announced that they would not appear, and exhorted the citizens to calmness and dignity. Not one of them broke faith. In the night some unknown hand had covered the face of each of the statues in the Place de la Concorde with a black veil. A few houses hoisted black flags.

The vanguard of the Prussians entered by the Grande Avenue des Champs Elysées on the 1st March, at eight o'clock, but without passing under the Arc de Triomphe, the middle arch being completely blocked up by heaps of stones and rubbish. They were preceded by a numerous staff, who rode on to the Place de la Concorde and marched round it several times, as though to take possession of it. A regiment, which appeared to be a second vanguard, entered Paris about half-past ten. The Emperor meanwhile reviewed the main body of the army on the

race-course of Longchamps. He afterwards returned to Versailles with the Crown Prince, and did not enter Paris at all. The troops in occupation marched with fife and drum down the Grande Avenue des Champs Elysées at about three o'clock. A great number of officers of all arms had requested permission to join the staff of General Kammecke, who commanded the corps of occupation. Count Bismark came the next day in a close carriage, but went no farther than the Avenue de la Grand Armée.

The Prussians came with all the panoply of war, like troops going into battle, not to a parade. Their baggage, ambulances, telegraphs, canteens, and forage waggons crowded the Palais de l'Industrie, the Rotonde des Panoramas, and the Cirque. Many officers and soldiers were quartered on the inhabitants; General de Kammecke established his head quarters in Queen Christina's house. The German soldiers, closely watched by their officers, and perhaps also feeling they were treading on a mine, were guilty of no provocation, cruelty, or depredation. At the round point of the Champs Elysées, whilst the Prussians were marching past by torchlight, a passer-by hissed them, and, being pursued, climbed over a hoarding in front of some buildings in course of erection. The Prussians burst open the door of the adjoining house

in search of him, and wounded the concierge and some other persons. A stone was flung at a Prussian soldier, and it knocked his eye out; the culprit was seized and executed on the spot. In the city some natives of Alsace, who were mistaken for Germans, were hunted by the mob, and for a time they were in serious danger. Several women of the town who addressed the Prussian soldiers were beaten.

At the clubs, which sat permanently, threats abounded; and even some rash demonstrations were made, such as the rolling of barrels of gunpowder into the hall of La Marseillaise, with the intention, it was said, of blowing up the palace of the Elysée. Artillery-men of the National Guard, aided by women and children, mounted five pieces of cannon on the platform of the Moulin de la Galette in full view of the Prussian army. The greatest danger, however, that which most alarmed General Vinoy and the Government, arose from the clause that authorized the Prussians to visit the Louvre and the Invalides. General Vinoy declared himself ready to carry out the condition with respect to the visit to the Invalides, but he pointed out the risks the visitors must incur, by venturing so far from the occupied portion of Paris, and added, that, unarmed as he was, and in presence of an

angry and armed crowd, he could not be responsible for the consequences of such imprudence. M. de Kammecke yielded this point, but insisted that his men should enter the Louvre. General Vinoy then explained that the galleries had no longer any interest, as all the large pictures had been taken down by order of M. Jules Simon, during the siege, rolled up, and stowed away in the half-subterranean galleries which seemed likely to be impervious to shot and shell. The Prussians would therefore see nothing but empty frames. All the windows of the sculpture galleries on the ground floor had been walled up, also by order of M. Jules Simon; so that they were simply dark vaults. It was consequently arranged that the soldiers should visit the great courtyard, but not enter the galleries. They did enter them nevertheless, for some of the officers, finding a door open, penetrated as far as the gallery of Apollo, and even were so imprudent as to open the famous "window of the Balcony of Henri III." and crowd into it to admire the fine view of the Quays, the Seine, and the Cité. So soon as the crowd on the bridges and in the streets observed the German uniforms, there arose a deafening roar of rage and defiance. Two-sous pieces were flung at the Germans with the cry, "Here is the beginning of the three mil-

liards." Nearly 300,000 National Guards, all armed, were in the streets. A single musket-shot might have led to a massacre, and renewed the war.

The peace was ratified at Bordeaux by the Assembly on the 1st March, the day of the Prussian entry into Paris. The news was received in Paris at seven o'clock in the evening. Had the Prussians been satisfied with the telegraphic despatch the occupation would have lasted only a single day, had they withdrawn when the authentic instrument of the ratification reached the hands of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, it would have lasted but a day and a half. Count Bismark succeeded, by delays and formalities, in making it last two entire days. It has been said that the Emperor William intended to make a solemn entry into the Champs Elysées with Count Bismarck and Count Moltke by his side, and that the 3rd March was the day appointed. If indeed he ever entertained this cruel and dangerous design, he was obliged by the formal text of the Convention to abandon it. The evacuation commenced early on the 3rd March, and terminated without any special incident; at noon it was completed. The crowd rushed into the Champs Elysées, now deserted by the enemy. The cafés where the Prussians had dined, the Café Dupont, the Restaurant Le Doyen,

were wrecked and pillaged by a band of ruffians; but one company of foot belonging to the National Guard sufficed to re-establish order.

The Central Committee had not been inactive during the two days of the German occupation. The members felt themselves all the more free to act that the soldiers of Faron's division were employed in surrounding and watching the Prussians. From the moment of the evacuation, they displayed fresh activity, as though they were in haste to complete their preparations for civil war. On the 3rd March they sent four battalions to the guard-house of the Gobelins then occupied by the "guardians of the peace;" disarmed the soldiers, took possession of their muskets and of a quantity of ammunition stored in the establishment; on the 4th they carried off twenty-nine howitzers from La Villette; two days after they seized 2000 muskets, belonging to the wounded and sick soldiers then under treatment in the Hospital of Saint Antoine. On the 10th they ordered three battalions to seize the cannons at the Luxembourg; but the attempt failed; on the 14th they stopped a train of thirteen waggons carrying powder, the last waggon only remained in their hands. On the 16th they attempted to capture the powder-magazine belonging to the ninth zone; the 131st foot, who were

ordered to take it, retreated before the determined resistance of the 21st battalion. The Committee was everywhere; it prompted the revolt of the Garde Mobile, it laid hands on the gunpowder belonging to the State which was stored in the bastions, and, the better to organize the approaching conflict with the regular army, it withdrew the cannon which had at first been placed in the Place des Vosges, and transferred them to the heights of Belleville and Montmartre. It also attacked Saint Pelagie with the object of releasing the prisoners of the 31st October and 22nd January.

The Committee never relaxed its efforts to entice the Line, and was actively seconded in this by the former mobiles of the Seine, and other discharged soldiers. On the 11th March the news came to Paris that the Assembly was to sit at Versailles, that Blanqui and Flourens were condemned to death *par contumace* for their participation in the rising of the 31st October; that the authorities had just suppressed six newspapers: *Le Vengeur*, of Felix Pyat; *Le Cri du Peuple*, of Jules Vallès, *Le Mot d'Ordre* of Rochefort; *Le Père Duchesne*, of Vermersch; *La Caricature*, of Pilotell, and *A Bouche de Fer*, of Paschal Grousset.

General Vinoy had good reason to fear that this news would exasperate the Federals; he warned all the commandants of the different

zones to redouble their vigilance. On the following day, the Committee issued a formal provocation to the army to revolt. It was a red placard, which was posted on all the walls of Paris.

The address was as follows :—

"To the Army.

"The Delegates of the National Guard of Paris.

"Soldiers, Children of the People!

"Shameful reports are circulated in the Provinces.

"There are in Paris 300,000 National Guards, and nevertheless troops are being brought in, who are deceived respecting the spirit of the Parisian population. The men who have organized our defeat, dismembered France and handed over our gold to the enemy, want to escape from the responsibility which they have assumed, by bringing about a civil war. They count on you as docile instruments of the crime they meditate. Citizen soldiers, will you obey a criminal command to shed the same blood as that which flows in your own veins? Will you rend your own flesh? No. You will never consent to become parricides and fratricides!

"What do the people of Paris want?

"They want to keep their own arms, to choose

their own chiefs, and to revoke their choice when they no longer have confidence in those chiefs. They want the soldiers to be sent back to their homes, to restore happiness to their families and to resume their work.

"Soldiers, children of the people, let us unite to save the Republic. Kings and emperors have done us enough harm. Do not stain your lives. Military discipline does not relieve the conscience from responsibility. Let us embrace in the full sight of those, who, to gain a step, to obtain a place, to bring back a king, would make us slaughter each other.

"Long live the Republic!

"Voted in the Vaux Hall, March 10th, 1871."

There were no signatures to this placard, which was read with enthusiasm in the quarters where the Federals were in the majority, and not without a certain sympathy in the quarters which were for "order." The great majority of the Parisian population is Republican, and the most conservative Republicans were not satisfied as to the future of the Republic in the hands of M. Thiers. The prospect of a bloody struggle between the Federals and the regular troops was appalling; they asked themselves which side they, who had not adhered to the federation, and who had no confidence in the regular government, ought to take

in the event of a collision. Even among them the suppression of the six newspapers was unpopular. Conservatives of all shades of opinion, even monarchical Conservatives, persisted in requiring the liberty of the press. It is worthy of remark that the people of Paris, whatever their political opinions, have always shown themselves unanimous on that point. During the siege, the suppression of a newspaper which had revealed the secrets of the Government was so unpopular that it had been impossible to persist in it. The Mayor of Paris addressed the following despatch to the Minister of the Interior :—

"The suppression is exciting an agitation which it would be unwise to treat with contempt. Groups of people are formed even in the peaceable quarters. A red placard addressed to the Army, which is a deliberate appeal to disobedience and revolt, is being posted The soldiers read it readily; this may become serious. Cannot this placard be suppressed?"

The Prefect of Police wrote to the General-in-chief on the 12th March at four o'clock in the morning :—

"I have had the placards removed as well as I could, but the adjutant-majors must have them torn off the walls of the barracks."

M. Charles Yriarte, in his book entitled

"The Prussians in Paris," relates that on his attempting to tear down one of these placards from a pillar in the Rue de Rivoli, he was instantly surrounded by a crowd, hustled, threatened, and otherwise ill-used. "It seemed," says he, "as though the entire population made common cause with the rising; weakness, pushed even to cowardice, let us all roll into the gulf."

General d'Aurelles de Paladines, who had been appointed some days before to the post of Chief Commandant of the National Guard, but was detained at Bordeaux by his duties as a member of the Commission of Fifteen, hastened to Paris immediately after the ratification of the treaty of peace. His official nomination dates from the 3rd March. Cluseret announced it to the Central Committee by a letter written at Bordeaux, as follows:—

"General d'Aurelles de Paladines is, after Gambetta and Trochu, the most guilty man towards France. It was he who delivered up the army of the Loire without a struggle, for one cannot give the name of combat to his shameful flight. He ought to have been tried by court martial, and yet it is he whom M. Thiers selects to place at your head! By what right is this fresh insult inflicted? Where is the mandate of M. Thiers, and of the

Assembly which has conferred power on him? Elected by the peasants for a specific purpose: to treat for the disgrace of France at the expense of the towns, it has accomplished its sorry mandate. Now it is nothing more than a group of factious men.

"The source of all power, and the only power in Paris, is you, National Guards of the Seine, you the advanced people."

On the day of his arrival in Paris, the 4th March, General d'Aurelles summoned a meeting of the majors at head-quarters. A very few of them responded to his summons.

The general published an order of the day, in which he spoke of discipline and repression. "My first duty is to secure the maintenance of order, and respect for law and property. Labour must repair the misfortunes of the war as speedily as possible. Order alone can give us back prosperity. I am firmly resolved to repress everything which might threaten the tranquillity of the city." There is nothing to be said against these words, still they were not calculated to allay excitement. The general had all the will to suppress and punish the promoters of rebellion, but he had not the means to do so; every one knew this, and none better than the Federals themselves. To show how little they regarded the superior who had been sent to them,

they hastened to elect generals. They did this without concert, in haste, in the guise of a protest, and in such confusion that no one knew whether the general-in-chief were Darras, or Henri, or Duval. Darras became an intendant, or something of that sort, under the Commune. Duval was the workman, transformed into a general, who was shot, by Vinoy's orders, after one of the first encounters, and who at least had this merit, that he died bravely. Henri, who was subsequently chief of the staff of Bergeret, exercised a sort of authority after his nomination: he had his staff and even a body-guard, in imitation of Flourens. It was he who took the command at the Chaussée-du-Maine, on the 18th March. A meeting held at the Vaux Hall, where the real business was mostly done, proclaimed Garibaldi general-in-chief. He was of course a general *in partibus*, but they gave him very effective lieutenants in Piazza and Brunel.

It was perfectly clear, from the election of generals, that D'Aurelles de Paladines, or any other chief appointed in his place by the Government, would not be obeyed. The Government had desired a resolute man, they had one; but of what avail was the will without the power? Another resolute man, General Valentine, was appointed Prefect of Police twelve days later.

These two nominations, D'Aurelles and Valentine, appeared satisfactory only because there was no real knowledge of the power of the Federals, nor of the disorganization and demoralization of what was taken for the army of order. Everything was toppling over. The Assembly was coming in a few days to sit at Versailles; the majority, incensed as they were against Paris, and determined, as they expressed it, no longer to suffer Paris to send a ready-made government into the provinces every six months, could not fail to come to violent resolutions. It was necessary to end matters before the arrival of the Assembly.

M. Thiers resolved to make a great effort to recover the cannon. If he succeeded, the authorities would again have the upper hand, all would then be easy. If he failed, he would retire to Versailles, reconstruct the army, and prepare to take Paris. Anything was preferable to the prolongation of a crisis which kept the Government face to face with an organized revolt, with listless adherents, and with an army ready to throw down their arms, or to fraternize with the insurgents.

CHAPTER V.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

M. JULES FERRY, who discharged the functions of Mayor of Paris, and whose ability and energy M. Thiers fully appreciated, was always present at the Ministerial Councils. General Vinoy and General d'Aurelles de Paladines were summoned to attend the Council held on the 17th March, at which it was the almost unanimous opinion that, during the night of the 17th or 18th, the heights of Montmartre should be occupied and the cannon which the Federals had accumulated there, seized; and that the safety of France and the honour of the Government depended on this being done. So long as the city was threatened with civil war, business could not be resumed, the Prussians would not depart, and the ransom could not be paid. The remembrance of the attempt made a few days previously by M. Clémenceau led the Ministers to believe that only slight oppo-

sition would be offered. M. Clémenceau had persuaded the officers of a battalion of his arrondissement that they would be doing an act of patriotism and wisdom in allowing the Government to resume possession of the guns; he had then advised the Government of this state of feeling, and indicated the day on which this particular battalion would be on guard. At the appointed hour on that day teams were sent to take away the cannon; but, either through some misunderstanding, or through the secret action of the Central Committee, the guns were not given up. For all that, the consent of the battalion was a symptom of weariness or of appeasement. The Government believed that the Central Committee had resisted so long as they thought force would not be used, but that, if active measures were taken, they would no longer resist the law by violence. Supposing, however, they did fight, the first few shots would rouse the National Guards, who had remained passive until now because they would not admit to themselves that there was real danger. Faron's division, which had already acquired steadiness under its able chief, would set the example to the soldiers who had arrived the day before.

General Vinoy did not share these views. He had for a long time previously been at variance with

the Central Committee; he thoroughly knew the dispositions of the Non-federal National Guards, while, as for what was called his army, he repeated again and again that he had under his command only a corps in process of formation, and that it would be imprudent to employ it, as he could not answer for it. He would have had the Ministers await the return of some of the regiments who were now prisoners in Germany.

"The new troops which form the army of Paris were scarcely organized," he says, in his history of these events, "the greater number of the men had been only two days in the ranks, and the regiments consequently lacked the necessary homogeneity and cohesion.

"A small army of from 25,000 to 30,000 men of inferior calibre, as opposed to 300,000 National Guards, the one indifferent if not hostile, the other well armed and possessing unexpected means of resistance; under such circumstances was the struggle undertaken, on which such grave and considerable interests depended."

These were strong reasons from a military point of view, but M. Thiers looked at the situation as a politician. Supposing the Government did not succeed during the night of the 17th with their insufficent force, that would be a repulse no doubt, but a repulse easily explained and repaired, it

would not be the same thing if the former, the regular army, were employed. In what state would it return? Several months of captivity might have transformed it physically and morally. It would be all over with this army, should it be beaten by the insurgents; while, should it fraternize with them, it would be all over with France! If it were evident, after the decisive proof of the 18th March, that the majority of the National Guard was not with the Government, it would no longer be possible to contend against Paris, and the only course left would be to quit the city and afterwards to retake it. These reasons convinced the Council. In any case they would only have three days to wait, for no one entertained any doubt concerning the resolutions which would be taken by the Assembly.

The plan of action was arranged between M. Thiers, General Le Flô, General Vinoy, and General d'Aurelles. General Susbielle, having with him Generals Paturol and Lecomte, was to take possession of Montmartre; General Faron to make himself master of the Buttes de Chaumont. Strong detachments were posted at the Hôtel de Ville and at the Tuileries; there was also a reserve corps at the École Militaire, whither the cannons recovered from the National Guard were to be conveyed. Thus the whole army of Paris was astir.

The artillery teams were stationed in the Champs Elysées and on the Place de la Concorde, in readiness for the first signal.

Everything passed off at first as had been hoped; on the morning of the 18th the heights of Chaumont and Montmartre were in possession of our troops. The satisfaction of the Government was, however, of but short duration. We had reached and occupied the heights without difficulty, as the expedition had not been foreseen. When the presence of our regiments became known, the Committee ordered the drums to beat to arms, the Federals presented themselves, and recovered their positions as they had lost them, without striking a blow. The troops had marched willingly, but in face of the National Guard, and especially of women and children who flocked to the ground, they would neither fire nor charge. The result of the operation was that the Federals kept their guns, and acquired the certainty that power lay with them, and that the Government was forsaken and impotent. It has been said that had there been a greater number of teams, and had they been on the spot at the same time as the soldiers, the cannon might have been carried away in an hour or two, so that the general-in-chief's error in the disposition of his forces was in reality to blame for the failure of

the undertaking. This opinion is generally entertained and repeated, but it will not bear examination. All the events of 1870-71 are rashly judged by prejudiced or ill-informed persons, who do not take into account the difficulties and impossibilities of the case. On the 18th March it would have been impossible for the generals to employ more horses than they used, for the very good reason that they had not got them. The siege had decimated our cavalry. The teams could not have been brought up to the point of attack at the same time as the soldiers, without risking the success of the operation and the safety of the troops. To convince one's self of this one has only to glance at the network of streets that had to be crossed, and at the heights that had to be scaled. Finally, to harness and transport the guns, which were the objects of the dispute, would have been impossible, since at Montmartre alone there were 171 pieces of artillery all entangled in one another, and several of them wanting their limbers.

It has also been said that the troops were kept inactive from five o'clock in the morning until the moment when a battalion of the Federals presented themselves with the butt-ends of their muskets raised, and demanded a conference. This is no less untrue. Sixty pieces of cannon had been carried

by the soldiers down to the Boulevard Courcelles, and the gendarmes were hastily harnessing them, when Bergeret came up at the head of a detachment of the 128th battalion. The superiority of his force rendered any attempt at resistance impossible. The crowd seized the teams, cut the traces, and thus without striking a blow captured the greater number of the cannons.

It is then vain to throw the responsibility of defeat on the alleged faults of the military authorities; the ill-success of the day was altogether due to the inertness of the National Guard and the defection of a considerable part of the army. This is the truth, and it is only by fully recognizing it, that we get a correct view of the events of that day, and those which ensued.

The call to arms had been beaten without intermission in all the rich quarters. What was the result? General Vinoy says less than 1000 men; M. Thiers, in his deposition, says 600 men. On the part of the soldiers, there was the reluctance which always exists at the beginning of a conflict of the kind. They were surrounded on all sides by the National Guard, crying "Vive la ligne!" crowds of women went through their ranks, gently and coaxingly reproaching them for their conduct, and exhorting them to make common cause with the people, until they refused to obey their officers,

raised the butt-ends of their muskets, or even gave up their arms altogether. The insurgents have boasted, shameful to relate, that they bought muskets from the soldiers "for a few sous." A great number of soldiers broke their ranks and went down into Paris, saying that an agreement had been come to, and all was over; others passed into the ranks of the insurgents, and were seen a few hours later amongst the assassins. General Lecomte was seized in the midst of his men, and dragged to the Rue des Rosiers. Whilst the soldiers were behaving thus at Montmartre, where the 88th regiment opened its ranks to the Federals, several other regiments in various parts of the city were showing signs of insubordination. The Hôtel de Ville being beset by a mob in the evening, the 120th (line regiment), quartered at the Prince Eugène Barracks, laid down their arms and fraternized with the rebels. The 135th, quartered at the Luxembourg, opened the gates, and joined the insurrection. Federals and soldiers of the line were seen in the streets arm-in-arm, uttering seditious cries, and disarming the soldiers whom they met if they refused to join them. The Council of Ministers, sitting permanently at the Foreign Office, learned successively that the Federals were masters of Montmartre and Belleville, and that the Government had no longer an

army. The Council was literally in the hands of the insurgents, who might arrest the Ministers or even kill them, as they killed that very day General Lecomte and General Clément Thomas, who had fallen into their hands.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when General Lecomte was taken by main force from the very midst of his soldiers. He was only defended by his officers, several of whom were also seized. The house (No. 6) to which they dragged him belongs to Madame Scribe; and the Military Committee of the 18th arrondissement, appointed a few days before at a meeting which took place at the Salle Robert, were sitting there permanently. The General being brought before them, they demanded that he should address a written order to abandon the heights to his brigade. This he refused to do. The Committee, having at the time only a few men at hand, sent off their prisoner under escort to the Château Rouge, where a large body of National Guards was posted. All along the way the mob shouted that the general had made his men fire on the people. At one o'clock a Federal captain presented himself, with an order bearing four illegible signatures, and the General was given up to this man, who placed him, with ten other officers brought from

various parts, in the midst of a platoon of sixty men, and took him back to No. 6, Rue des Rosiers, amid the groans and threats of the mob. On his arrival he was placed in a separate room, being thus parted from the officers who accompanied him. The crowd surrounded the house, crying, "Death to them!" Towards three o'clock General Clément Thomas, who was not in uniform (he had been replaced since the 3rd of March by General d'Aurelles), got out of a carriage on the Place Pigalle, and bent his steps towards the Boulevard Rochechouart. He was recognized. "He transported the citizens in 1848! He insulted the National Guard! He sold us to the Prussians!" Transported the citizens in 1848! This was indeed a long-lived hatred. It must have been the sons of some of those who were transported who raised that cry. The Commune was not so vindictive towards Cluseret, who distinguished himself against the insurgents in June, and was decorated for it. A similar accusation against the Deputies of 1848 was made on the 28th February in a proclamation of the International: "We remember June, 1848!" Amongst the signatures to this proclamation was that of a man who, being a Deputy at that epoch, had, like all his colleagues, fought against the insurrection. Those who arrested Clément

Thomas do right to recall this dark remembrance. June, 1848, March, 1871; it is the same conflict, and General Clément Thomas must die like General Bréa! Some men of the National Guard dragged him with insults and threats to the house in the Rue des Rosiers. More than 2000 persons had followed him. He was placed in the same room with Lecomte, and for more than two hours the Federal officers who were present strove to prevent the crowd, now threatening them in their turn, from forcing the door. The Committee, who seemed to wish to avoid murder, transformed itself into a Court-Martial, and conducted a sort of examination. They asked Lecomte, "Do you regret having fired on the people?" He calmly replied, "What I have done is well done." While two or three of the leaders were hesitating and trying to gain time, those who surrounded the General, and the crowd outside, were eager for the end.

"Why these delays? we are betrayed!"

A rush was made, inside, upon the judges, outside, upon the house. The prisoners were lost. In a trial which took place before the Court-Martial in March, 1878, Captain Franck related a strange and touching incident. "They came to ask General Clément Thomas whether he preferred being shot inside the house, or in the garden.

He was just asking me what was my age? "Twenty, General." "That is very young to be shot." Turning towards the insurgents, he answered, "Outside;" then he whispered in my ear, "Thus, they may spare you."

At this moment (it was five o'clock) the doors and windows were smashed in and the crowd filled the house. Some madmen seized Clément Thomas by the collar. "You betrayed us at Montretout!" A sergeant of the line shook his fist at General Lecomte, and vociferated, "You sent me to prison for thirty days; I shall be the first to fire at you!" General Clément Thomas was thrust out of the room and driven by blows from clenched fists and from the butt-ends of muskets, into the garden; on the way several balls struck him and he was covered with blood. He was placed against the wall; holding his hat in his right hand, he tried to shield his face with his left. Several random shots struck him, and he fell on the right side, his head against the wall, and his body doubled in two. The men went on firing at him, afterwards they trampled on his corpse, and even struck it with their muskets.

Then came Lecomte's turn. Calmly he handed his money to Commandant Poussargues, who had been seized with him, and entrusted to him his last words for his family, then he walked out

before his assassins with such quiet dignity that several insurgent officers saluted him.

It is a curious and significant fact that among the considerable number of assassins, and the much more considerable number of madmen, who had applauded the murders, after they had provoked and rendered them inevitable, not a single person urged a fresh attack on the ten officers who were awaiting their doom at the distance of a few paces from the victims; on the contrary, they vied with each other in aiding the prisoners to escape. The rescuers did not forget, however, to give their names, and they took precautions so that they might be recognized or found at need, and be able to claim the reward of this good deed.

At the same hour at which the two Generals fell, a train coming from Orleans was stopped at some distance from the fortifications, by the orders of a Federal officer accompanied by a strong detachment of the National Guard. The captain made General Chanzy, who was on his way to Versailles, and whose presence in the train had evidently been signalled, get out. M. Turquet, a Member of the National Assembly, who witnessed this arrest, placed himself beside the General in order to share his fate. They were both taken in a carriage, in the midst of insults and threats,

to the prison of the zone, where they remained two days. There they found General Labouriau, of the army of the Loire, who had been arrested at the same time as General Chanzy. Several times during the journey from the railroad to the prison General Chanzy's life was in danger. He was protected from the fury of the populace by a member of the Central Committee, M. Leo Meillet, who had taken him under his protection and defended him up to the last moment with presence of mind and courage. The crowd talked of nothing less than shooting General Chanzy over against the Chapel of General Bréa. They said, "Let them fire a single shot at us, and we will throw the corpse of General Chanzy in their faces!" A historian adds the following words, but does not record who it is that heard them: "The left bank must have its corpse as well as the right!"

Finding that the General was not safe in the prison of the zone, M. Leo Meillet had him removed to the prison of La Santé, where he was detained several days. The insanity of keeping a man as a hostage who could not be reproached for anything except his victories, became at last apparent. He was released with many apologies, and returned to his post in the Assembly, whither M. Turquet had already preceded him.

The evening of the 18th and a part of the night, were employed by the Committees of the different arrondissements, and by the Central Committee, in consolidating their victory, and preparing for the conflict for which they looked on the morrow. Belleville and Montmartre, bristling with barricades and artillery, were transformed into fortresses; on various points of Charonne, the Faubourg Saint Antoine, the Faubourg du Temple, the Gobelins, Montrouge, Vaugirard, Grenelle and the Batignolles, barricades, with cannon and mitrailleuses, were erected. The barricades of Belleville were constructed in the morning under the eyes of General Faron's soldiers; the men who worked at them chatting quietly with the sentinels, like ordinary workmen occupied in earning their daily bread. The Federal battalions remained under arms all day and all night, some guarding the parks of artillery and the barricades, others visiting every part of the city, parading on the boulevards, and advancing as far as the Place de la Concorde. Up to this time the idea of shutting the gates of Paris, and holding the Government, with the small army gathered together, and the École Militaire, already hesitating between fidelity and desertion, at their mercy, had not occurred to them. Neither did they on the following day think of marching on Versailles, where everything

was in tumult and disorder. The Committee itself had not a recognized and respected authority, nor a disciplined, compact, manageable army. The members thought only of seizing the public offices, which is indeed the business of the first day in every Parisian insurrection. A battalion entered the barracks of the Chateau d'Eau at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th March, and no one made the least show of resistance. Some individuals in plain clothes, who accompanied the battalion, carried off the soldiers' chassepots. At nine o'clock in the evening, Bergeret, the newly elected Commandant of the Legion of Montmartre, and Arnold, who, like him, was a member of the Central Committee, penetrated so far as the Place Vendôme at the head of two battalions. The 1st battalion (non-federal) was on guard there, and retired without an attempt at resistance. It is probable that orders to avoid a conflict had been given. Bergeret immediately placed detachments to bar the two issues which lead, one into the Rue de la Paix, the other into the Rue Castiglione. The taking of this position was important, since it handed over to the insurgents the Ministère de la Justice, and the head-quarters of the National Guard, of the Army, and of the Citadel.[1]

The members of the Central Committee, divided

[1] La Place de Paris.

on that evening into several groups, sat at the Rue de l'Entrepôt, at the Chaussée Clignancourt, and at the Rue Basfroi. They had given Lullier, a member of the Committee, the command of the National Guard "while awaiting the arrival of Garibaldi," whom they had appointed General-in-chief. It was Lullier who invaded the Tuileries, the greater number of the Mairies, and on the following day the Ministères in succession. Great importance was attached as usual to the possession of the Hôtel de Ville. A first attempt to seize it did not succeed, thanks to the firmness of M. Ferry; but a formal order to withdraw having been sent by the Government during the evening, some federal battalions entered the Hôtel de Ville, and, to their profound astonishment, found it completely deserted. The members of the Central Committee followed them closely. They installed themselves in the cabinet of the Mayor of Paris, and thought of nothing now but reigning. M. Thiers was already at Versailles. The ministers, the army, all the government officials were about to join him.

M. Thiers had decided upon departure from the moment at which it became evident that the National Guard belonging to the party of order would not act. On the previous day he had said to M. Jules Simon, "I hope the National Guard—

ours—will make up their minds this time. If they turn out in great numbers, their presence alone will ensure us the fidelity of the army. With them we are strong; the Federals will not dare to resist; we shall recover the cannon without striking a blow, and the Central Committee will be dissolved. If the National Guard does not show, we have only the hope left that the Committee will not venture to commence the contest; in that case we shall live as we have done for the last fifteen days, that is to say barely existing, and we shall see what happens. But if there is resistance, if the army be not firm, we have but one means of preventing a revolution which would be the ruin of France; it is to leave Paris, and reorganize the army at Versailles. This is the plan which succeeded with Windischgraetz after the events of Vienna, and it was this I advised during the days of June, 1848, in case of the success of the Insurrection." In June, 1848, the National Guard were aware that they were face to face with social war, and their presence on the side of the army had decided the victory. M. Thiers hoped still, all through the morning of the 18th, that they would appear; but when he learned that only a few men had come to the meeting-places of the different companies, he said to those about him, "Our duty is to retire," and when a murmur arose, "France is in question," said he, "and not ourselves."

The mayors and the Republican deputies of Paris, who from the first acted the part of peace-makers, and persevered in doing so until the election of the Commune, met several times during the day on the 18th. At one of these meetings which took place towards three o'clock at the Mairie of the 2nd arrondissement, several of its members were despatched to M. Picard and to General d'Aurelles de Paladines. Nothing but talk took place, no proposals were made, no conclusion was reached. Another meeting, more numerous than the first, held at six o'clock in the evening at the Mairie of the 1st arrondissement, passed some decided resolutions. The members thought they should conquer the hesitation of the republican, but not socialist National Guard, by appointing M. Dorian, Mayor of Paris, M. Edmond Adam, Prefect of Police, M. Langlois, Commandant-in-Chief of the National Guard, and General Billot, Commandant-in-Chief of the Army of Paris. Most of these personages, among them General Billot, were absent whilst they were being thus disposed of. A Commission composed of Messieurs Tirard, Vautrain, Vacherot, Bonvalet, Méline, Tolain, Hérisson, Millière, and Peyrat, was charged to carry these proposals to the Government. Subsequent events have shown that even had the Government accepted them, the insurrection would have taken its course all the same.

The National Guard, decimated by departures for the provinces, disheartened by the siege, irritated against the Assembly, lacked organization, and cohesion. The Central Committee, flushed with victory, would have refused to disarm. When the Commission presented itself in the evening at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M. Thiers had already left for Versailles. The delegates had a brief interview with M. Jules Favre, who had just been apprised of the assassination of the two generals; they found M. Ernest Picard at the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister promised to transmit their message. He knew afterwards, indeed he even then saw what the mayors of Paris would not see; that there was neither National Guard nor Army. The proposal was, however, adopted by the Government a few hours later, on the advice of M. Picard, not that they were mistaken about it, but simply in order to have it to say that no means of pacification had been left untried. After their return to the Mairie of the 1st arrondissement, the delegates were consulting with their colleagues who had remained there, when M. Mahias, Secretary-General to the Mairie of Paris was introduced. He came to inform them that the Hôtel de Ville was deserted, and to entreat them to take possession of it, so that the treasury and the archives might not be left at

the mercy of the Insurgents. Unlike M. Jules Ferry, who was only the delegate of the Government, the mayors of the arrondissements had been elected by universal suffrage; many of them were likewise representatives of the Seine; they believed that their authority would be respected, especially when they should present themselves as negotiators between Paris and Versailles. The meeting immediately despatched some of its members to the Hôtel de Ville. The Federal battalions arrived there at the same time, and almost as soon the Members of the Central Committee, who refused to receive them, stating that they themselves would take such measures as the circumstances might require. The delegates of the Municipalities returned with this answer to the Mairie of the 1st arrondissement, where M. Ferry had just arrived. They had scarcely entered when the Mairie was surrounded by a detachment of Federals sent by the Central Committee. These men did not go quite so far as to arrest the mayor and the deputies of Paris, but allowed them to depart on giving their names. They adjourned to the Mairie of the 2nd arrondissement. M. Ferry, who would undoubtedly have been arrested, got out unperceived, through a little door which opened on the square between the Mairie and the Church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois.

Shortly after midnight M. Labiche, Secretary-General to the Ministry of the Interior, brought the nomination of Colonel Langlois as general-in-chief of the National Guard to the mayors and deputies assembled at the 2nd arrondissement. M. Langlois was with him. M. Labiche also announced that the Government intended to appoint M. Dorian Mayor of Paris, and that the municipal elections were to take place without delay. These resolutions, which met the wishes of the mayors and the Republican deputies, had been taken at a secret meeting held by the Ministers in the Rue Abattucci, at the residence of M. Calmon, Under-Secretary of State for the Interior. This place of meeting had been selected because the Ministers were beset by alarmists and advisers. M. Jules Simon arrived there about nine o'clock, accompanied by Admiral Pothuau and Count Roger du Nord. Two unknown persons were waiting for him at the door, although the place of meeting had been kept a profound secret. "Do not enter," they exclaimed, "the house is about to be surrounded!" They then hastily gave him some details of the assassination of the two generals, the accuracy of which was afterwards proved, and went away, repeating their warning with emphasis, but refusing to give their names. M. Dufaure and General Le Flô came an hour after; Messieurs Jules Favre and Picard late in the night. First

the double assassination was discussed, then it was said, "We must act." The appointment of Colonel Langlois was already agreed upon, and the Ministers sent for him; he accepted it with his usual courage and devotion. It was decided that on the following day the appointment of M. Dorian as Mayor of Paris should be proposed to M. Thiers, and that a bill to regulate the municipal elections should be presented to the Chamber. The bill was to be brought in before the sitting of the 20th March; it should be applied to all the communes in order to save time; and urgency should be demanded.

M. Picard undertook to draw up the bill, which was to contain only two clauses; and M. Jules Simon wrote a last appeal to the National Guard, to be posted in Paris on the following morning. "Who are the members of this Committee?" said the proclamation. "No one in Paris knows them; whomsoever they be they are the enemies of Paris, which they are giving up to pillage; of France, which they are delivering to the Prussians; and of the Republic which they will hand over to despotism. The abominable crimes that they have committed deprive those who would dare to follow or to submit to them of all excuse. Do you wish to share the responsibility of their assassinations, and of the ruin which they will work? Then, remain at home! But if

you regard your honour and your most sacred interests, in that case assemble at the call of the Government and the National Assembly."

The Council broke up at midnight. Messieurs Picard and Jules Favre passed the remainder of the night at M. Calmon's house, where they received a formal and pressing order from M. Thiers to repair immediately to Versailles. Messieurs Dufaure, Jules Simon, and their colleagues directed their steps towards the École Militaire, from whence they set out before daybreak, at the same time as the army.

M. Langlois went first, as we have seen, with M. Labiche, to the Mairie of the 2nd arrondissement, where his colleagues, the deputies of the Seine, were sitting in permanence. He left them to go to the Hôtel de Ville. The Central Committee received him immediately. He informed the members present of the decisions of the Government. He was asked, "By whom have you been appointed?" "By the Government, by M. Thiers." "We do not recognize his authority; the National Guard will appoint its own chief." M. Langlois retired; as he could no longer hope to be recognized by the Federals, he thought, with some reason, that his appointment had no further object, and he hastened to the *Journal Officiel*, to withdraw his order of the day, which

was already composed, and was to appear on the morrow. On Sunday morning the insurgents did not fail to heap insults on the Government, "which had vanished before the breath of the people." They could not sufficiently express their anger and contempt for the "fugitives." Many Parisians belonging to the party of order shared this indignation. They felt that they had been delivered into the hands of the insurgents, and accused "a Government which deserted its post and its duty."

It might have been said, in reply, that they had only themselves to blame. For four-and-twenty hours the drums had beat to arms incessantly in the very quarters inhabited by these complainants. How many National Guards had answered to the call? Scarcely 600; a number which could avail nothing. The Government, reduced to the necessity of yielding to the rising, or of opposing it with the feeble army at their command, had chosen, courageously, and perhaps imprudently (such was the opinion of General Vinoy), the latter alternative; but the only weapon which remained to them had burst in their hands. Half the army had betrayed them, and was now shouting in the streets with the insurgents, and preparing to change its colours. Under these conditions the Government might certainly have remained in Paris, like a

sentinel who lets himself be killed at his post. Next day the Central Committee would have arrested M. Thiers and his ministers, and kept them as hostages, or allowed them to meet the fate of Lecomte and Clément Thomas. Was it to avoid a similar fate that the Government had retired to Versailles? In truth, it would be judging human nature very harshly to arrive at such a conclusion. All the ministers were men who would fearlessly have awaited the course of events; they had all given proofs during their lives of courage more difficult than that. The effect on the country of their arrest or death was what they had to consider, without a thought for their personal safety, and the question studied under that aspect could only be answered by their departure; not that the Ministers, with the exception of M. Thiers, were individually necessary, but because a change of Government, under such circumstances as those which would have produced it, must necessarily have been attended with disastrous consequences. Let us first convince ourselves that they had no longer any means of resistance. The attempt which was rashness on the 18th would have been insanity on the 19th. Was the National Guard with the Government? Certainly not! When Admiral Saisset was in command, it was estimated that he might count upon

20,000 men; but supposing the figures to be exact, scarcely a fourth of the number could be relied on for any vigorous enterprise. The battalions had all one common anxiety, the defence of their own quarters, and the maintenance of order in them. The admiral went to Passy, where he was personally popular; he asked for two battalions to recover the Ministry of the Interior and the Elysée; 300 men came! Thus the Government had not the National Guard with them. And the Army? As a general rule, it is always difficult to enlist the army against the people, when at least a portion of the National Guard is not on the side of the troops. The 19th March tested the truth of this. The disposition of the army had been ascertained on the previous day: and yet, no, the word is out of place, and an insult to the real army. It was not an army which was then in Paris; it was only an army in process of formation. Was it to be expected that the 15,000 or 20,000 gathered together at the École Militaire would not follow in the footsteps of the 88th regiment, of the 120th or the 135th? One had only to look at them! These soldiers, who were not yet soldiers, seeing the Ministers imprisoned or killed, would inevitably have disbanded themselves. The Central Committee would no longer have been an insurrectionary, alongside of a

regular, Government, it would have been *the only Government.* Was it to be supposed that the National Assembly, in whom the sovereignty resided and whose delegate M. Thiers was, would appoint a new Chief of the Executive so promptly that there should be no interregnum? What would be the choice of the monarchical majority? How would the newly elected Chief of the Executive be received by the large towns, half carried away by the movement in Paris? how would he be received by the French army which the preliminaries of peace had sent beyond the Loire, and by that other army which the German prisons were about to yield up? What other name would command the unanimity that the name of M. Thiers had produced? Who was the general that would be accepted by the Republicans? Who the civilian that could command the obedience of the army? Before proceeding to form a new Government, the Assembly would have to meet. Under what conditions? In what place? Impossible to think of Versailles, for the Committee would have occupied the palace on the 19th without striking a blow. Whilst the scattered deputies were seeking an asylum and security in some distant town, what would have become of France? to whom would the army have given itself? Would it have remembered ancient legends or later defeats? What would the

Germans, our enemies of yesterday, who still occupied a third of our territory, have done in this terrible interregnum? When the Government with which they had treated had disappeared, would they not have declared the peace broken? They might take Paris, march on the Loire, disperse our shattered, uncommanded army, or treat with the man who had ruined us, and give him a semblance of sovereignty under the protection of their bayonets! Every one knew that a few weeks previously they had contemplated an alliance with the Empress. M. Thiers saw all this at a glance. He understood that it was necessary to make sure of the safety of the Assembly, to preserve a Government to France, to save the remnant of the army of Paris from the shame of fresh defection or disarmament. Civil war had become inevitable; he wanted to wage it with the chances of victory assured. Paris cried out the day after, "I am forsaken!" but, by remaining in the city, the Government would have ruined Paris, and with it, France.

M. Thiers left Paris on the 18th, at five in the afternoon, after having given a written order for the departure of the army and the evacuation of the forts on the left bank, so that the insurgents might have no easy victories. Several of his ministers had resisted; M. Jules Favre, M. Picard,

the Mayor of Paris. M. Jules Ferry, who for fifteen days had asked for a successor, but none the less had done his duty with indomitable energy, wrote that he would remain at the Hôtel de Ville with 500 men. He received a formal order to withdraw, but did so only when the last man on duty had left the building. The departure of the army was not effected without danger. The last regiments hesitated to advance, and looked back lingeringly. General Vinoy, who was obliged to go in person more than once to rally them and urge them forward, placed gendarmes who could be relied on, in the rear, to prevent desertion. The snow covered the earth like a winding-sheet. It was still dark when the last soldiers crossed the Seine. From Sévres onwards, the General placed outposts, and arranged everything for the defence of Versailles. A regiment which had not received notice in time, and remained shut up in the gardens of the Luxembourg, resisted all temptations and bribes, forced the gates, crossed Paris with drums beating, and came to join the French army at Versailles. This was the 63rd regiment; almost all the men belonged to the Marines, and the 45th of the line.

On arriving at Versailles on the 19th, at 4 a.m., M. Jules Simon alighted at the Prefecture, and found the President of the Council already up. He

asked him if he had thought of sending troops to Mont Valérien, which, as he had just learned at the École Militaire, was garrisoned only by two disarmed battalions of Chasseurs-à-pied. M. Thiers thanked him warmly, but said that a fortress like Mont Valérien could not be carried by skirmishers, or at the point of the bayonet, that there were cannon there and a resolute commander, and that a single shell would be sufficient to put a tumultuous mob of the National Guards to flight, that an attack in form with sufficient forces was not to be feared on this first day, but that he was aware of the necessity for prompt action. The difficulty was not in sending a regiment, but in finding one to send. Several Deputies, amongst them M. Buffet, came during the morning to express their uneasiness on the same subject. General Vinoy, warned by a despatch from Colonel Lochner, who commanded the fort, consulted with M. Thiers respecting a trustworthy regiment. Their choice fell on the 119th of the line, commanded by Colonel Cholleton. This regiment, which had been quartered at Versailles since the 12th, and billeted among the inhabitants, was very steady and animated by an excellent spirit. The orders were given on the 20th March, at 1 a.m. The Federals presented themselves at Mount Valérien on the evening of the same day, to take possession, but they found it

strongly occupied. They retired with precipitation, and no other attempt was made on the fort until the battle of the 3rd April.

M. Thiers sent the following circular to be distributed in the departments; and thenceforth until Paris was retaken, he wrote the bulletins, which were despatched by telegraph to the prefects every evening with his own hand.

"Versailles, 19th March, 1871, 8.25 a.m.

"The entire Government is at Versailles, and the Assembly is collecting there. The army, also, to the number of 40,000 men, is concentrated in good order under the command of General Vinoy. All the authorities and all the commanding officers have arrived at Versailles.

"The authorities, both civil and military, will execute no orders except those of the legal Government residing at Versailles, under pain of forfeiture. The members of the National Assembly are requested to hasten their return in order to be present at the sitting of the 20th March.

"The present despatch is to be made known to the public. A. THIERS."

All the employés in public departments were ordered to Versailles at once, so that they might be at the disposal of the Government. This measure was indispensable for the transaction of public business, and it also

deprived the insurrection of a dangerous weapon. Only those employés whose presence in Paris was necessary were excepted; such as Hospital doctors, head masters of educational establishments where there were boarders, custodians of museums or libraries, and the officials of the Bank of France with the exception of the Governor. It was absolutely indispensable that he should be within reach of the Chief of the Executive. All these officials were speedily installed in the palace.

The town of Versailles was no longer recognizable. Strange to say, nothing had been altered in it except its physiognomy, which was woe-begone. The Prussians, always very orderly under the eye of the master, had destroyed nothing. A few placards in the German language in the railway stations, and on the barrack walls; a great deal of dirt in the streets, was all that remained of them out-of-doors. The late occupants had, however, left traces of their presence in the restaurants and cafés to which the new arrivals flocked. These places looked like German taverns, and smelt of tobacco, beer, and leather. The town was in a state of famine, there was nothing to eat. The king, or rather, since he gave himself that title at Versailles, the Emperor, had lived at the

Hôtel de la Préfecture. Nothing was changed there. When leaving, he stopped his carriage just as he was passing through the gates, and calling the porter, showed him a little gilt candlestick, of no value, which he held in his hand. "I take this as a souvenir," said he; "let no one be disturbed about it."

M. Jules Simon, accompanied by the custodians of the Museum, inspected the entire palace, even to the garrets; nothing had been disturbed; two frames only, which had enclosed small pictures of no importance, were empty; the canvas had been cut close to the edge. M. Thiers installed himself at the Préfecture which the Emperor had just vacated, like a new prefect who occupies the apartments and the cabinet of his predecessor. The avenues, and the Place d'Armes in front of the palace were crowded with soldiers under canvas. The huts at Satory, which had been vacated by the Germans, were not sufficient to accommodate the troops. Men, horses, and guns were crowded together in the midst of mud and hastily swept up snow. Cooking, by the light of blazing faggots, was done in the open; there was no order or discipline; a look of anger and defiance was on every face; it was like a Tartar horde rather than a camp. The soldiers no longer saluted their officers, but looked threateningly at them as they passed.

Entire families were seen making their way through this crowd with their parcels and boxes. These were bourgeois who had fled from Paris, employés who had followed their chiefs, and deputies arriving from the departments for the meeting of the Assembly on the 20th March.

The deputies were in their places at the appointed hour. All were alarmed and indignant, but there were gradations in their sentiments according to their politics. It could easily be seen that the Republicans meditated conciliation, and the Monarchists vengeance. The murder of Clément Thomas and Lecomte immensely enhanced the gravity of the situation. It was no longer a political insurrection that had to be dealt with; it was a social war which revived all the detested recollections of the terror. This was the impression of all France; the members of the Central Committee themselves felt it. They were divided between anxiety to exculpate themselves from participation in these outrages, and a savage delight in them which they felt, and could not conceal. In the same number of the *Journal Officiel* of the 19th March, they wrote in the first page of "the bloody mud with which their honour had been stained," and on the second page expressed their indignation that this "execution" should be called an "assassination." "These two men,"

said they, "have suffered under the law of War." What more could the men of the Central Committee say to render themselves objects of universal execration?

The sitting of the 20th March was commenced under these impressions.

M. Grévy spoke as follows: "The misfortunes of our country seemed to have attained their height. A criminal insurrection, which has not even a plausible grievance or a serious pretext to excuse it, has, however, been added to them. A factious Government sets itself up against the national sovereignty, of which you alone are the legitimate representatives. You must rise with courage and dignity to the height of the solemn duties which such a situation imposes on you. Let the nation remain calm and confident. Let it rally round those whom it has elected: Might will remain with Right. The national representation will make itself respected, and will accomplish its mission unmoved, staunching the wounds of France, and securing the stability of the Republic in spite of those who compromise it by the crimes that they commit in its name."

The civil war had existed *de facto* in Paris since the end of January, and it began, we may say, officially, on the 18th March, when an insurrectional Government installed itself in the Hôtel de Ville.

If the Germans did not intervene and profit by our fresh misfortunes, the issue of the conflict could not be doubtful. The immense majority of the country was with the Assembly and the legal Government. The Central Committee tried hard to bring over the large towns to its side. In its letters and proclamations, it was said that the "rustics" desired to make peace at the expense of the large towns, that they wanted to bring us back to Monarchy; and that the enlightened population of the large towns had a right to rule the destinies of France. They sent emissaries to Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux, to all the great centres; on the 23rd March, the Commune was proclaimed at Lyons and Marseilles, on the 24th, at Toulouse; there were troubles at Beziers, at Narbonne. Saint Etienne was moving, like Paris it had its assassination; the new prefect, M. de l'Espée, was murdered on the very day of his arrival. In spite of all this, nobody in the Assembly felt any doubt of ultimate success.

M. Thiers, especially, was very confident. "The Prussians will not stir so long as the conditions of the treaty are executed. The insurrection of two or three towns will be the affair of a few days. France, in its entirety, is with us. I shall reorganize the Army," said he; "I answer

for it. We shall take Paris, or Paris will surrender. We have the majority, even in Paris." Such was his language, in private, at the Council, in the lobbies of the Chamber, in the tribune, in his correspondence with the generals, the prefects, and our diplomatic agents. He never ceased to work for success, and to reckon on it. We shall see that his previsions were realized in every particular.

In the Assembly, in all France, but especially in Paris, opinion was divided. One party believed the present struggle to be terminable by force only; the other, in spite of everything, believed in the possibility of conciliation. The very idea of conciliation, whatever its basis, seemed criminal to the majority of the Assembly, whose anger increased in proportion as the Parisian insurrection developed itself.

The mayors of Paris (there were several amongst the members of the Assembly) ascending the tribune to plead for mild measures on behalf of the immense Parisian population, who were victims of the Central Committee and not its accomplices, were received as though they were partisans of the insurrection; they, who ever since the 18th March, had been risking their lives in opposing it. The majority met the most just and least revolutionary proposals,—for instance,

the proposal to vote urgency for the Municipal Councils bill by such interruptions as the following:—

"Paris must first disarm, and afterwards, we shall see! Paris must submit, do you hear! Yes, Paris must submit! Let us call up the provinces and march on Paris, if necessary; this must be put a stop to!" Not only was Paris attacked, but the mayors were personally insulted. M. Tirard, who had displayed great courage in his conflict with the Revolution, was taunted thus:—"Blame *your friends* at least. Blame the cut-throats!" At the sitting of the 28th March, Count de la Rochethulon, after having shown the Assembly a strip of paper which had been pasted on the door of his house, in Paris, with the words "Good for shooting," printed on it in large letters, said,—

"I beg my honourable colleagues of the Left, now masters of Paris, to have the kindness to tell their colleagues that I consider myself in a state of legitimate defence;" and as a violent commotion arose, and M. de la Rochethulon was called on to explain himself, he added, showing a notice signed by the mayors of Paris,—

"It is a positive fact that certain members of this Assembly, who have, or have not resigned, are on terms with the Insurgents."

M. Prax-Paris, speaking of the mayors of Paris at the sitting of the 4th April, called them "The accredited Ambassadors of the Insurrection." The mayors of Paris and deputies of the Seine, who were received in this fashion at the Assembly, were in no greater favour with the leaders of the Insurrection.

At Versailles they were insulted, at Paris their appointments were cancelled, they were expelled from their Mairies, and imprisoned. The Committee, intending to hold the Communal elections on the 22nd, had directed the mayors to preside at them. To do so would have been to associate themselves with the insurrection; they refused. Their resistance exasperated the Committee, who called it resisting the people, and had, in fact, already occupied the greater number of the Mairies. This was one of Lullier's exploits on the 19th; the measure was confirmed and made general on the 23rd, after the refusal of the mayors. Henri, one of the "generals," said, "We must occupy the dissentient Mairies by faithful battalions. When there are no faithful battalions in the arrondissement, recourse must be had to the battalions of the Hôtel de Ville."

This was the case in the 9th arrondissement, as the following proclamation of the mayor, M. Desmarest, proves:—"The invasion of our Mairie

by a military force unknown to the 9th arrondissement puts a stop for the present to the transaction of the public business, of which we have accepted the charge and the honour."

All the Mairies, except those of the 1st and 2nd arrondissements, were invaded either by the federal battalions of the arrondissement, or by the prætorians of the Hôtel de Ville. Several of the mayors published protests like the following:—"The Mayor and assistants of the 17th arrondissement, dispossessed by force, declare that from this day forth all municipal business is suspended in the arrondissement. The use of the seal of the Mairie, all requisitions, and the employment of the funds by the usurpers, will be regarded as criminal acts. The municipal officers reserve the authority that has been delegated to them, by universal suffrage, and will use it according to incontestable right when this ephemeral usurpation shall have come to an end."

M. Henri Martin, "resolved to defend the Republic, and to second the conciliatory efforts of the deputies of Paris," organized a service of protection and surveillance, in concert with the officers of the 38th and 72nd battalions; and called upon "all citizens devoted to the Republic and friends of order, for their aid." This example

was followed by several arrondissements, including the 3rd. The protest of M. Clémenceau deserves to be given in full. "Citizens, to-day at noon (the 22nd March) the Mairie of the 18th arrondissement was invaded by an armed troop. An officer of the National Guard dared to summon the Mayor and his assistants to give up the Mairie to a delegate of the Central Committee of the National Guard. The Mayor and his assistants, wearing their municipal insignia, and in the presence of all the employés of the Mairie, summoned the officer on guard to expel the intruders. The latter, after having conferred with his commander, replied that he refused to execute this order, and that he was prepared to side with the violators of this law. The ringleaders then arrested the Mayor and two of his assistants, and took them to the Guard-house between two files of National Guards. Shortly after, the Mayor and his two assistants, elected by the 18th arrondissement, were informed that they were 'free to retire.' Citizens, we are anxious to avoid a conflict, the disastrous consequences of which we dread; that is our reason for yielding to force without appealing to force; but we loudly protest against the outrage which the National Guard of the 18th arrondissement has inflicted on the person of Republican Magistrates, freely

elected, and who declare hereby that they have faithfully discharged their duties." Thus, not only were the mayors expelled, they were also imprisoned. On the 23rd March, a proclamation of the Commission charged by the Central Committee to proceed with the municipal elections was posted in the 4th arrondissement. It began with these words: "The municipal officers of the 4th arrondissement having deserted the Mairie, and the departments being in a state of complete disorganization...." In the 12th arrondissement the Central Committee had replaced the elected municipal officers by a Commission. It was the same in the 5th arrondissement; the provisional mayor, Régère, accepted, he said, his appointment by the Central Committee "as a means of conciliation and order." To make a revolution in the name of the communal liberties, and at the same time to expel the elected mayors from their Mairies, was a mere trifle to the Central Committee.

The mayors of Paris, however, who had already rendered so many services during the siege, conceived that they had a new duty to fulfil, a duty no less serious than the prevention of bloodshed; and neither the Right nor the Insurgents had the power to turn them from it for a moment.

The object of their constant solicitude was, not the promoters of the insurrection, whom they fought inch by inch, but the honest Republican population to whom they themselves belonged, and who, while claiming its just rights for the city of Paris, and fearful for the Republic on account of the opinions of the majority and the political past of M. Thiers, regarded the so-called Government which practised or praised assassination, subjected Paris to a silly tyranny, and boasted of making war upon the bourgeoisie in the name of the proletariat with horror.

As well as ringleaders there were dupes; as well as dupes there were victims. "The Insurrection of Paris" is perpetually spoken of: it would be more correct to say of the half of Paris, or indeed not even the half, for at most the insurgents could reckon on only a fourth of the population. The proclamation of an insurrectional government, which led directly to the Commune, and the assassination of the two generals, had opened the eyes of the absent or the defaulters of the 18th March. They now saw the abyss into which they had fallen by their own fault, and only asked for the means of accomplishing their own rescue. Nevertheless, in the war which was impending, should it come to war, the entire

population of Paris would have to suffer; the innocent as well as the guilty, and perhaps the innocent more than the guilty.

The well-disposed population had committed a fault against the country and itself by its absence on the 18th March; in politics, however, one must not be pitilessly just, but rather allow something for the weaknesses of humanity. Sixty thousand absentees from the ranks of the well-disposed National Guard had placed it in a minority; it was only fair to give the abstainers the benefit of that circumstance, and also, as some excuse for them, to consider what was the actual composition of the National Guard. During the siege everybody was armed, the bad as well as the good, chance-comers and even foreigners as well as residents. There was consequently a great mixture in the companies. The officers had been selected as if for an army, with a view to fighting, and not with a view to the preservation of order, like a national guard. The insurrection having been made in the name of the National Guard by delegates and officers of the National Guard, the army of order and that of the Revolution had common cadres; and more than one company, the majority of whom were enemies of the Commune, found themselves under the command of a Communist. A still more inextricable difficulty arose

from the uncertainty of the situation. The National Guards, on whom the Government had counted, believed themselves abandoned by the Assembly, by the Army, and by the Government; by the Assembly, which had chosen to sit at Versailles, and, but for M. Thiers, would have retired as far as Fontainebleau; by the Army, which had shown signs of disaffection on the 18th; by the Government, which had withdrawn, for imperative reasons, no doubt, but such as not every one could appreciate. Finally, (and this it was which weighed heavily on the minds of the greater number,) they believed that they only had anarchy and monarchy to choose between. The Commune in Paris or the King at Versailles; a hard alternative for conservative Republicans. They were mistaken, their alarm about the Government was without foundation; their fears about the Assembly were exaggerated; and they did not discern communism and barbarism behind the Central Committee. In absenting themselves they made a terrible mistake, but their error is none the less an excuse, which it would be equally unjust and impolitic to ignore. The mayors believed—they never ceased to believe—that the party of order would rise in arms, with imposing unanimity, so soon as the Assembly, by proclaiming the municipal franchises of Paris, should remove the last scruples of

the hesitating, and deprive the insurrection of the pretext of which it had availed itself. After all, was this a time for judging men? Nothing was to be thought of except the interest of the country, and the interest of the country demanded that civil war should be averted by any means. Such were the sentiments of the mayors of Paris, when with indomitable perseverance they interposed between two kinds of equally violent though not equally justified hatred. All their efforts were baffled by the fixed determination of the Assembly, which in its only too legitimate hatred of the Commune, and in its ill-will towards Paris, either rejected conciliatory measures, or altered, under pretext of amending them, or accepted them too late; and by the criminal obstinacy of the Central Committee, who wanted to create the Commune, to become masters of it, and by its means to govern France. That on both sides it was a government of combat, may be admitted without any comparison between the causes or the persons.

The Central Committee and the mayors had held several discussions during Saturday night; the former sometimes assuming a tone of mastery, at others endeavouring to obtain the connivance of the mayors in certain operations which had been resolved upon. The Committee had not been able to come to an agreement with them on

any point. It had published two short proclamations on Sunday morning the 19th March, one addressed to the people, the other to the National Guard. These proclamations bore twenty signatures only, and it is worthy of remark that out of the sixty names of which the Central Committee ought to have been composed at the rate of three delegates to each arrondissement, there had never appeared on the various proclamations more than forty-eight. There are also only forty-eight names on the list of the members composing the Committee furnished by General Vinoy, bearing the date of 5th March. The name of Assi first figured on the placards of the 19th, so that on the Boulevards de la Madeleine and des Italiens, "The Government of M. Assi" was spoken of, not without the recollection that M. Assi had played the principal part in the strikes at Auzin and Creuzot.

These proclamations were fresh attacks on the Government and the Assembly, which were accused of desiring to overthrow the Republic; they announced the raising of the state of seige, and "the convocation of the people of Paris in their sections to hold their communal elections." The Committee added, "our mandate has expired."

The mayors and the deputies assembled at two o'clock at the Mairie of the 3rd arrondissement.

At the meeting—whose state of feeling might be described by saying that the Assembly made it uneasy, and the Committee made it indignant—about forty majors were present. Above all, the great object was to prevent a fratricidal conflict in Paris. It was agreed on all hands that confidence would be restored if the Assembly granted an immediate municipal election (the National Guards to elect their own chiefs), and revision of the act relating to commercial bills. The mayors flattered themselves that by these concessions they could obtain the retirement of the Committee. They wanted to be invested with the whole administrative authority. The Government, without sharing all their opinions, but animated like them by a desire for a peaceful solution of the difficulties of the situation, gave them full powers of administration. In reality the mayors did nothing but resume the policy of temporizing and pacification which they themselves had tried up to the 18th March, which they could not continue after an open contest, but which, now tried with prudence and reasonableness by men who had been elected by universal suffrage, might still have some feeble chance of success.

The first step was the renewal of communication with the leaders of the Insurrection, and the Central Committee, either uneasy at the

position, or to gain time, or in order to control the municipal power which was the outcome of universal suffrage, proposed an interview. It took place in the Hôtel de Ville. The 3rd arrondissement was represented by two Deputies and six mayors or their assistants. The discussion was very earnest, and was prolonged until late at night.

The Committee was immovable with respect to what it termed its rights over the National Guard; this meant the keeping of military authority in its hands, but it seemed willing to yield the administrative authority to the mayors. The members wished to deliberate apart before giving their ultimatum. At midnight, Varlin, Jourde, Boursier, and a fourth whose name is unknown, came to inform the representatives of the municipalities that the Committee reserved to itself the military authority only. The delegates of the mayors insisted that the Hôtel de Ville should be restored to them, in order to mark by a visible sign that the administrative authority was again placed in their hands. They carried this point, and separated towards four o'clock, having agreed upon a convention, which Messieurs Lanjalley and Corriez, who seem to have drawn their information from an official source, sum up thus:—

"The municipal administration will be restored at nine o'clock in the morning to the elected

municipal officers, represented by delegates; Citizen Bonvalet, mayor of the 3rd arrondissement; Murat, assistant-mayor of the 10th, and Denizot, assistant-mayor of the 12th, will take up their residence at the above-named hour at the Hôtel de Ville.

The Central Committee will leave the Hôtel de Ville, and remove to head-quarters at the Place Vendôme, where it will continue to rule the National Guard.

Finally, the deputies and mayors being unable to grant the municipal elections, which the Assembly alone can legally establish, will publish a notice in which they shall promise to intercede with the Assembly in order to obtain these elections, and also for the same reason those of the officers of the National Guard for all ranks.

"The Government of the Hôtel de Ville (Messieurs Lanjalley and Corriez designate the Central Committee thus) will, a few hours after this notice is posted, post another announcing the preceding resolutions on their own part."

Matters looked now as though they were coming to a settlement, provided the Government and the Assembly did not place any obstacle in the way, and the deputies set out for Versailles with every intention of keeping their promises. Before

their departure they caused the following notice to be posted on the walls of Paris :—

"Citizens.

"Impressed with the absolute necessity of saving Paris and the Republic, by removing all cause of conflict, and convinced that the best way to attain this supreme object is by satisfying the legitimate desires of the people, we have resolved this day to request from the Assembly the adoption of two measures which, we are in hopes, will, if adopted, contribute to restore composure to the minds of all.

"These two measures are—the election of all the chiefs of the National Guard, and the establishment of a Municipal Council to be elected by all citizens.

"What we want is that which is essential to the public welfare under all circumstances, order, with liberty and through liberty.

"Long live France! Long live the Republic!

"The Representatives of the Seine,

"Louis Blanc, Victor Schoelcher, A. Peyrat, Edm. Adam, Floquet, Martin Bernard, Langlois, Ed. Lochroy, Farcy, H. Brisson, Greppo, Millière.

"The mayors and assistant-mayors of Paris."

(The signatures follow.)

The conditions being fulfilled on their side,

MM. Bonvalet, Murat, and Denizot presented themselves, on the 20th March, at nine o'clock in the morning in order to take possession of the Hôtel de Ville. But the Central Committee had thought better of it, and a note was read to the Commissioners, stating that "under the present circumstances, the Committee, being responsible for the consequences of the situation, could not relinquish either the civil or military power."

The *Journal Officiel*, which appeared for the first time under the authority of the Central Committee contained:—1st, A note in which the Committee justified its own conduct; 2ndly, a resolution of the Central Committee, announcing that the elections of the Communal Council of the city of Paris would take place on Wednesday, the 22nd March, by ballot, and by arrondissement, at the rate of one councillor to 20,000 inhabitants, or fraction exceeding 10,000; 3rdly, a declaration by V. Grêlier, describing himself as "Delegate of the Government to the Ministry of the Interior," of which the following are the exact terms:—

"We declare that henceforth we are firmly resolved to secure respect for the preliminaries of peace, in order to preserve the safety of Republican France and at the same time the public tranquillity."

The Committee stated besides, that while

awaiting the establishment of the true Republic, they were holding the Hôtel de Ville in the name of the people.

Thus the Committee broke the convention which they had agreed on at four o'clock that morning, and which had been loyally carried out by the deputies and the mayors. The deputies, who had already arrived at Versailles for the sitting of 20th March, were immediately informed of this breach of faith. They persisted none the less in their resolutions. MM. Clemenceau and Tirard placed the bill for the municipal elections before the Assembly that very day; and M. Lockroy, the proposal relative to the elections of the National Guard.

The former was thus conceived:—

"Article 1.—The election of a Municipal Council for the city of Paris shall be held as early as possible.

"Article 2.—The Council shall be composed of eighty Members.

"Article 3.—The Council shall appoint its President, who shall bear the title, and exercise the functions of Mayor of Paris.

"Article 4.—There is incompatibility between the functions of municipal councillor and that of mayor, or deputy of one of the arrondissements of Paris."

The following is the text of the second proposal:—

"Article 1.—The corporals, sergeants, and officers, up to and including the rank of captain, shall be elected by the direct votes of the National Guard.

"Article 2.—The majors and ensigns shall be elected by the officers of the battalion and by delegates appointed in each company in number equal to that of the officers.

"Article 3.—The colonels and lieutenant-colonels shall be elected by the captains and majors.

"Article 4.—The general-in-chief of the National Guard of the Seine shall be elected by the colonels, the lieutenant-colonels and the majors.

"Article 5.—The general shall appoint his staff. The colonels also shall appoint their staff. The majors shall appoint the captains, the adjutant-majors and the adjutants shall appoint the sub-officers."

These two propositions bore the same signatures as the proclamation posted in Paris that morning, and in addition those of MM. Jean Brunet, Tolain, Clemenceau, Tirard, Edgard Quinet, Cournet, and Razoua. M. Millière then presented a proposal in the following terms:—

"The delays accorded by the act passed on the 10th March for the payment of commercial bills shall be prorogued for three months."

The Assembly, agreeing with the Government, voted urgency for the municipal elections bill,

and for that on the payment of commercial bills. Urgency was not demanded for the elections of the National Guard.

Thus, the majority itself, notwithstanding its too legitimate causes of complaint, granted on that day all it could grant; that is to say, urgency. The Government also officially renewed the authorization to the mayors of Paris, to exercise administrative powers already given on the night of the 18th. M. Tirard and his colleagues, in spite of the breach of faith by which they had suffered that very morning, declared themselves ready to continue their efforts for the peaceful termination of the sedition of Paris.

The first thing to be done was to prevent the elections fixed for the 22nd by the Central Committee. M. Tirard undertook to do this, and, speaking from the tribune, he said,—

"If we intended to become the accomplices of the insurgents we might lend ourselves to the resolution taken by the Central Committee to proceed with the elections on Wednesday next. The summons is placarded on all the walls of Paris. Well! we have declared, we the municipalities, that we should oppose this election. As to me, I will oppose it. (*Hear! hear!*)

M. Clemenceau.—"And I also!

M. Tirard.—"We will all oppose it, we will furnish neither lists of electors, nor voting-places,

nor ballot-boxes, nothing in short that is necessary for an election." (*Hear! hear!*)

M. Tirard kept his promise. A notice signed by the deputies and the mayors appeared on the 21st. It announced the vote of urgency for the municipal elections.

"The National Guard," said the signatories, "will be guided by its patriotism; it will make a point of honour of removing all cause of conflict whilst awaiting the decision of the National Assembly."

The same day the following declaration appeared in thirty-six Parisian newspapers, of different political opinions:—

"To the Electors.

"Considering that the convocation of the electors is an act of national sovereignty;

"That the exercise of this sovereignty belongs only to the powers which spring from universal suffrage;

"That consequently the Committee installed at the Hôtel de Ville have neither right nor qualification to convoke the electors;

"The representatives of the undersigned journals regard the convocation announced for the 22nd March as null and void, and advise the electors to take no heed of it.

"The following have adhered to this:—

"*Le Journal des Débats*, *le Constitutionnel*,

l'Electeur Libre, le Petit Moniteur, la Vérité, le Figaro, le Gaulois, la Petite Presse, le Petit Journal, Paris Journal, le Petit National, la Presse, la France, la Liberté, le Pays, le National, l'Univers, la Cloche, la Patrie, le Français, la Gazette de France, l'Union, le Bien Public, l'Opinion National, l'Avenir Libéral, Journal des Villes et des Campagnes, le Journal de Paris, le Moniteur Universel, la France Nouvelle, le Monde, le Temps, le Soir, l'Ami de la France, le Messager de Paris, le Peuple Français."

This spirited proceeding was all the more courageous that the Central Committee had not shown much respect for the liberty of the press. The *Officiel* of the 20th March contained a paragraph which was very like a threat.

"The Republican authorities of the capital," said this note, "desire that the liberty of the Press as well as all other liberties shall be respected; but they hope that all journals will understand that the first of their duties is the respect due to the Republic, to truth, to justice, and to right, which are placed under the protection of all."

"The Republican authorities of the capital," undertook to furnish a commentary on these ambiguous words, by suppressing the publication of the *Gaulois* and the *Figaro* on the 19th March. They did not inflict the same punishment on the thirty-five journals which had joined in the protest,

they merely threatened them. "This is an outrage committed by the reactionary press against the sovereignty of the people of Paris," said the *Journal Officiel* of the 22nd. "It is a direct incitement to disobedience. Severe repression will be the consequence of these outrages should they be repeated." The *Journal Officiel* renewed its threats on the following day. "We cannot attack the liberty of the press; only, as the Government of Versailles has suspended the ordinary action of the tribunals, we warn those dishonest writers, who, under other circumstances would thus render themselves amenable to the common law against libel and insult, that they will be immediately brought before the Central Committee of the National Guard."

Notwithstanding this arrogant tone, the Committee hesitated before the protest of the press, of the mayors elected by universal suffrage, and of the deputies of the Seine. They had already postponed to the 23rd the elections at first announced for the 22nd; and two demonstrations by the party of order which took place on the Boulevards and in the Place Vendôme on the 21st and 22nd March, (blood was shed during the second of these), contributed to render a further adjournment necessary to the accomplishment of the objects of the Committee. The population of the quarters

inhabited by bankers, and the higher ranks of commerce, began to wake out of their lethargy. The energy of the mayors restored courage to them. A certain number of majors, not federals, assisted at their consultations. Several of the National Guards who were on the side of order acted as sentries during the day on the Place de la Bourse in front of the unoccupied Mairies of the 1st and 2nd arrondissements; and had also retained possession of the railway station of St. Lazare, although their presence was useless so far as facilitating communication between Paris and Versailles was concerned, because the Federals searched the trains at Asnières, where they had established a guard-house. A meeting was held at the Grand Hôtel on Tuesday the 21st. A few persons came out from it, shouting, "Vive la Paix!" They were followed by several who were walking on the boulevard, and who shouted with them. It was agreed that this procession should be repeated on the following day, and that the demonstration should be made in greater force. On Wednesday the meeting, as arranged, was held in front of the Grand Hôtel. The promoters of the demonstration carried a large tricolour flag; they were followed by about 600 persons, belonging to the bourgeoisie, who shouted "Vive la Paix" as on the previous day. The crowd followed, astonished, but sympathizing

and confident. The 'demonstration' proceeded to the Bourse, where the National Guards presented arms. They then retraced their steps, and turned into the Rue de la Paix.

The Place Vendôme was the head-quarters of the insurrection. The Committee sat at the Hôtel de Ville, but the superior officers of the National Guard remained constantly at the Place Vendôme, where they were in force. A cordon of sentinels barred the entrances to the Rue de la Paix, and the Rue de Castiglione. The demonstration first encountered two sentinels posted in advance, who attempted to oppose their passage, but they pushed on, and the sentinels were obliged to fall back. What happened then? It is absurd to suppose that a band of 6 or 700 persons had dreamed of engaging in a struggle with a much more numerous body of National Guards, armed to the teeth, and taking aim at them. But it is probable that the boldest of the members of the demonstration thought the Federates would not fire on unarmed citizens, or at any rate were willing to run the risk. What is certain is that the insurgents did by roll of drum summon the demonstration to disperse, but that they held their ground. All at once a discharge was heard. The insurgents assert that a pistol-ball fired from a window had wounded a National Guard. If this be true, it was the act of a mad-

man. The firing of a pistol from a window would have justified a strict search in the house from whence the shot came; but it neither explains nor justifies a general volley on an unarmed crowd. The demonstration had not fired; they had no muskets; the order to fire on them was given by the men who had justified the assassins of Lecomte, and Clément Thomas, in the newspapers the day before. The inoffensive crowd, taken unawares by a volley of musketry, fled as fast as they could in every direction, leaving eight wounded and thirteen killed in the Rue de la Paix. On the next day, Thursday, 23rd March, the following proclamation appeared in the *Officiel*:—

"Citizens,"

"Your righteous anger placed us on the 18th March at the post which we were to occupy only for such time as is strictly necessary to carry out the communal elections.

"Your mayors, your deputies, repudiating the engagements which they made when they were candidates for office, have placed every obstacle in the way in order to impede those elections which we are anxious to conclude with as little delay as possible.

"The reaction, excited by them, declares war on us.

"We must accept the struggle and crush re-

sistance in order that you may proceed with the elections in the calmness of power and strength.

"Consequently the elections are postponed until Sunday next, the 26th March.

"Until then the most energetic measures will be taken to insure respect for the rights you have redeemed."

It was after this proclamation that the Mairies, which until then remained unmolested, were invaded, with the exception of the Mairies of the 1st and 2nd arrondissement. Delegates from the Central Committee would present themselves, and summon the mayor to withdraw. The mayor would protest, and declare that he would only yield to force.

They would then send for the officer in command of the guard-house, and ask him this question, "Will you obey the municipality, or the Central Committee?" He invariably replied, "The Central Committee;" and the municipality withdrew.

This open war with the municipalities, the threatening proclamation, the occurrences of the 22nd, led the mayors of Paris to resolve on a measure which was carried into execution on the 23rd, at Versailles. Having nothing more to hope from the Central Committee, they determined to make a last and solemn appeal to the Assembly.

Events had travelled at such speed during this fatal week, and the slightest movements of "the street" had suddenly been invested with such importance, that before leaving Paris for Versailles, the mayors deemed it indispensable to give the National Guard a chief.

Admiral Saisset had been elected deputy of the Seine in the preceding month, by a very large majority. He had been returned by no less than 154,347 votes. He was popular in Paris not only in consideration of his services and his courage, but on account of the death of his son, who was killed during the siege. The Admiral was walking on the Boulevards the day after the rising, when he was recognized and cheered by the crowd. Several officers of the National Guard who gathered round said to him, "Place yourself at our head!" A few of the number set out immediately for Versailles, to request his appointment from M. Thiers. They said, "Every one will rally round such a chief as he." M. Thiers consented at once, and signed the appointment, which was notified to the Admiral on Sunday, the 19th March, at ten o'clock in the evening. Admiral Saisset immediately put himself in communication with the mayors elected by universal suffrage, thinking that their support would strengthen his hands.

The mayors of Paris, sharing this persuasion, and believing that an appointment made on their suggestion would be more popular than one emanating directly from the Executive, wishing also to surround the Admiral with men who were popular in Paris for their opinions, and their courage, issued the following notice on the morning of the 23rd :—

"The Assembly of the mayors and deputy-mayors of Paris, in virtue of the powers conferred on them, in the name of universal suffrage, by which they have been elected, and for whose principles they intend to secure respect, whilst awaiting the promulgation of the act which shall confer on the National Guard of Paris their full right of election, seeing that there is urgency,

"Appoint personally,

"Admiral Saisset, representative of the Seine, to be Commandant of the National Guard of Paris;

"Colonel Langlois, representative of the Seine, to be Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Schœlcher representative of the Seine, to be Commander-in-chief of the artillery of the National Guard."

At the same time that they took this measure, the mayors who were going to Versailles determined to attend in a body at the sitting of the Assembly, when one of them, speaking in the

name of all, should explain the condition of Paris, and ask the representatives to vote urgency for the Electoral Acts, and to fix the election for as early a date as possible.

The advanced Republican party is sometimes a little theatrical. The mayors ought to have contented themselves with being received by the bureau, and placing their propositions in the hands of M. Grévy, who was a man to do them justice and lend them support. But, full of the importance of their proceedings, and of the sense of their own earnestness, they wanted and looked for solemnity. Haunted by the recollections of the first Revolution, some of them would fain have appeared at the bar and had all the honours of the sitting. They contented themselves indeed with a gallery which was readily placed at their disposal, but they entered it in a body, wearing their official sashes, and crying, "Vive la République!" The Left responded to that cry which was so dear to them; the Right, on beholding these worthy people who were striving so bravely for order, imagined themselves in the actual presence of the Insurrection. They also fancied, like the mayors, but with very different feelings, that the first days of the first Revolution had returned. They did not need the spectacle before them to evoke those phantoms which were ever present to

their minds; and with cries of "Order! Order!" they demanded the expulsion of the intruders, who came before them wearing their sashes, and shouting "Vive la République" in the gallery, where all demonstrations were forbidden. A scene of tumult ensued, but it was of short duration; for M. Grévy at once adjourned the sitting, in accordance with a previous resolution, until nine o'clock in the evening. When the members resumed their places, M. Arnaud (de l'Ariège), deputy, one of the mayors of Paris, read the following declaration by his colleagues:—

"Gentlemen,

"We have very important communications to make to you. Paris is on the eve, not of an insurrection, but of civil war,—civil war under its most terrible aspects. The population are anxiously awaiting—firstly from you, and afterwards from us—measures of such a nature as will prevent further bloodshed.

"We believe that we are thoroughly acquainted with the state of feeling in all classes, and we are convinced that the triumph of order and the safety of the Republic require the following:—

"According to us, it is absolutely necessary:—

"Firstly, that the National Assembly place itself in permanent communication with the mayors of Paris by such means as in its wisdom it may deem best.

"Secondly, that the mayors be authorized to take, at need, such measures as may be imperatively required by the public danger, subject to rendering an account to you of their conduct, and to answering for it.

"Thirdly, that the election of the General-in-Chief of the National Guard, by the National Guard, be fixed for the 28th of this month.

"Fourthly, that the election of the Municipal Council of Paris take place even before the 3rd of April, if possible.

"And lastly, that in all which concerns the act relative to municipal elections, the condition of eligibility be reduced to six months' residence, and that the mayors and their assistants proceed with the elections."

The storm of the afternoon was, as often happens, followed by a calm. The address was received with deference. Although drawn up by the mayors, and presented in their name, it was signed only by deputies who were also mayors or deputy mayors of the arrondissements of Paris. Urgency was voted without opposition. M. Grévy spoke a few words, intended to lessen the effect of the hostile demonstrations of the Right. In spite, however, of these extenuations and apologies, the mayors must have left Versailles with the sense that their peace-making rôle had exposed them to injustice from the two parties.

They had declared from the tribune (through M. Clemenceau) that they retained no illusions with regard to the Central Committee; after the sitting of the 23rd they cannot have entertained any with regard to the Right of the National Assembly.

They had been premature in their statements to the Parisians. To announce by placards the nature of demands which are about to be made is almost to promise that they shall be granted. Admiral Saisset, who shared both their hopes and their efforts, had gone so far as to assert that their dreams of pacification were accomplished facts. The following was posted by his orders on the morning of the 24th:—

"Dear Fellow-citizens,

"I hasten to inform you that in unison with the deputies of the Seine and the elected mayors of Paris, we have obtained from the Government of the National Assembly;

"1st. The complete recognition of your municipal franchise.

"2nd. The election of all the officers of the National Guard, including the General-in-Chief.

"3rd. Modifications of the act on commercial bills.

"4th. An act on house-rent, favourable to the occupiers, up to and including tenancies of 1200 francs. Until you shall confirm my nomination

or replace me, I will remain at my post of honour to forward the execution of the acts of conciliation which we have succeeded in obtaining, and thus to contribute to the consolidation of the Republic."

The "Government of the Assembly," of which the Admiral speaks in this proclamation was M. Thiers, it was not the Assembly. M. Thiers could not associate himself openly with the proceedings of the mayors; because, in his position he could not do so, without giving a sort of sanction to the insurrection, and also because he knew the sentiments of the majority, and was the more bound to take them into account, that the country could not have borne a Government crisis in addition to its other dangers. But in his ardent desire to avert bloodshed, he favoured the efforts of the mayors within the limits of truth and possibility, and urged forward pacificatory measures. The mayors had found him disposed to favour their views up to a certain point. He thought that the acts on municipal elections, on the National Guard, on bills, and on house-rents, ought to be passed with as little delay as possible (he had even said so within the last eight-and-forty hours). He wished them to be liberal, which did not mean that he accepted the basis laid down by Admiral Saisset, especially with regard to the election of the Com-

mandant of the National Guard. He promised his support only, because he had only that to give. No Government promises to make laws, it only promises to propose them. However great the influence of M. Thiers over the Assembly, it was no longer all-powerful. Notwithstanding his reserve, he constantly betrayed a leaning towards conciliation which irritated and disturbed the Right. It was, however, perfectly well known that he would deal gently only with those who were misled, and that he would be as incapable of pardoning the leaders of the Revolution as of countenancing their principles. He had thought it right, on several occasions, to affirm that he would maintain the Republic, and although these declarations were in conformity with what was called "The pact of Bordeaux," as he took care to show at the sitting of the 27th March, they appeared almost treasonable, if not to the whole of the Right, at least to the most violent, and to the leaders on that side of the Chamber. Admiral Saisset, in his generous ardour, exaggerated the magnitude of the promises and the extent of the power of M. Thiers, and the mayors, without going quite so far as the Admiral in their expectations, believed that their proposals, for which urgency had been voted without debate, and in which it appeared to them the last hope of

safety resided, would be adopted almost in their entirety. This hope encouraged them to further efforts; the danger seemed to them so terrible that they never wearied in their exertions.

The day after M. Arnaud de l'Ariège had read the address of the mayors to the Assembly, the Central Committee, aware of the importance of the Admiral's proclamation, resolved to recommence negotiations, taking it for a basis. They sent General Brunel and another of their colleagues as negotiators. The envoys presented themselves this time in no friendly fashion; they came at the head of a strong detachment and with artillery, which caused a panic in Paris. The mayors, overlooking the proclamation of the 23rd, in which the Committee declared war on them, agreed to the discussion, which took place in the afternoon. It was commenced at the Mairie of the 1st arrondissement, and continued at the Mairie of the 2nd, whither Brunel came with his troops, and where twelve of the mayors and their assistants were assembled, together with several deputies. During the discussion, the National Guards stationed at the Bourse, and those whom Brunel had brought with him, remained in presence of each other, so that a sanguinary conflict would surely arise if no agreement was come to.

The date of the municipal elections was one

of the chief points in dispute. The Committee insisted on the 26th March, the mayors would have preferred the 3rd April, because they expected that M. Ernest Picard's Municipal Bill would be passed by that time. They considered themselves authorized to propose the 30th March as a compromise; this was accepted by General Brunel after obstinate resistance. That point being settled, the good understanding seemed complete. There were indeed some difficulties as to the election of the General-in-chief. M. Schœlcher would have had him elected by two grades, but M. Brunel declared that he should be elected by direct universal suffrage, or the negotiation must be broken off. This threat silenced all objections. The 30th March was fixed for the municipal election, the 2nd April for the election of the General-in-chief by direct universal suffrage. Brunel appeared on the threshold of the Mairie with the mayors, and announced that peace was concluded. His escort received the announcement with acclamations, which were eagerly echoed by the National Guard and the party of order. The news spread throughout Paris, and produced general satisfaction.

Whilst all was joy in Paris, on the afternoon of the 24th, the Assembly at Versailles was preparing to discuss the proposal of the mayors, which had

been granted urgency on the previous day. The Commission, having been appointed at two o'clock, had chosen M. de Peyramont President, and immediately set to work. Their report was not finished at six o'clock in the evening, so that M. Jules Simon proposed a night sitting, which was immediately agreed to. All was going well up to that time, both at Paris and at Versailles.

But before the night closed, all was lost. The Assembly met at ten o'clock, waited some time for the Commission, which was with M. Thiers, then M. de Peyramont moved an adjournment, and finally M. Thiers came in person to make the same demand without giving any reason. "If the discussion takes place," said he, "it will be seen that the Government has no personal cause to fear it, but they dread it for the country's sake. One imprudent word may lead to much bloodshed." The Assembly, moreover, could not enter upon the discussion, as the report had not been made. M. Arnaud de l'Ariége therefore simply withdrew his motion until the sitting of the following day.

What had happened was this: the turbulent spirits, both at Paris and Versailles, had once more got the better of men of good sense.

When the news of Admiral Saisset's proclamation reached Versailles, the most excitable among

the members of the Right had raised a cry of treason, had assembled at once in one of the bureaus, and were contemplating nothing less than handing over the Government to the Prince de Joinville. The Central Committee at Paris had refused to ratify the treaty which had been concluded by its delegate.

"Admiral Saisset makes acceptable proposals," said Assi, who presided, as he always did, at the meetings of the Hôtel de Ville; "but who will answer for their being carried out after the election? Let us commence by electing the Commune. We are masters of the situation, our adversaries although apparently determined on resistance, have neither organization nor community of ideas." Bergeret continued in the same strain. The mayors were assembled at the Mairie of the 2nd arrondissement, when Ranvier and Arnold came to inform them that the agreement was broken off, and that the elections would take place on the 26th.

The Central Committee made its will known to the population by the following notice:—

"Citizens, carried away by your ardent desire for conciliation, happy to realize that union which is the object of all our efforts, we have loyally stretched forth the hand of brotherhood to our opponents. But the continuance of certain manœuvres, and especially the transfer of mitral-

leuses to the Mairie of the 2nd arrondissements by night, oblige us to maintain our first resolution.

"The vote will take place on Sunday, 26th March. If we are mistaken as to the intentions of our adversaries, we invite them to prove that we wrong them much, by uniting with us in the common vote of Sunday."

The mayors were in the right to break off all communications with a Committee who first granted, and afterwards refused, whose concessions were a sham, and who, in order to gain their object more readily, did not hesitate to deceive their adversaries by the pretence of negotiations. Their first idea was to adopt the same course on the 26th as that which they had followed on the 22nd and 23rd; namely, to refuse to countenance the election, and to protest beforehand against its results. Then again, they reflected that the Central Committee was in the minority. If all those who were afraid of it voted unanimously, it must necessarily be beaten, and would be forced to disappear. The mayors would thus procure the safety of Paris, and the preservation of peace, which they had vainly sought from the Central Committee, by means of the population itself. They knew besides, that their own adherents were at variance on the question of the opportunism of the vote, and that several of the

National Guard were resolved to go to the ballot, whatever might be the resolution taken by the mayors. The major of the 10th battalion had said in the presence of M. Schœlcher, "our men will not fight, and the vote shall be on Sunday."

Ranvier and Arnold came back during the day on the 25th, and offered to restore to the mayors the eighteen Mairies from which they had been expelled, if they would consent to summon the electors and to preside at the voting. If they refused, the elections should take place all the same, without their assistance. The meeting, which was composed at that moment of seven mayors, twenty-seven of their assistants, and six deputies, after a long discussion, and with much hesitation, submitted. It was certainly pushing the oblivion of injuries very far, but their ardent desire to escape a civil war rendered any alternative acceptable. "What would we not submit to," said the members amongst themselves, "to avert bloodshed, and avoid giving an opportunity to the Prussians!"

The agreement was drawn up in the following terms:—

"French Republic."

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

"The deputies of Paris, the elected mayors and assistants reinstated in the Mairies of their arron-

dissements, and the members of the Federal Central Committee of the National Guard, convinced that the only means whereby civil war and bloodshed in Paris may be avoided, and at the same time the Republic be firmly established, is, to hold the elections immediately, hereby summon all the citizens in the electoral constituencies for next Sunday. The bureaus will open from eight in the morning, and will close at midnight.

"The inhabitants of Paris are aware that under the present circumstances their patriotism requires that they should all give their votes, so that the elections may be of the important character which alone can secure peace in the city.

"LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC.

"The representatives of the Seine present in Paris:—

"Clemenceau, Floquet, Greppo, Lockroy, Schœlcher, Tolain.

"The mayors and assistant-mayors of Paris:—

1st Arrondissement, Ad. Adam, J. Meline. 2nd, Brelay, Loiseau-Pinson. 3rd, Bonvalet Murat. 4th, Vautrain, de Chatillon, Callon, Loiseau. 5th, Collin Jourdin. 6th, Leroy. 9th, Desmarest. 10th, A. Murat. 11th, Mottu, Blanchon, Tolain. 12th, Grivot, Denizot, Dumas,

Turillon. 13th, Combes, Leo Meillet. 15th, Jobbé-Duval. 16th, Seveste. 17th, F. Favre, Malon, Villeneuve, Cacheux. 18th, Clemenceau. 19th, Deveaux, Sartory.

"The delegate members of the Central Committee:—

"G. Ranvier, G. Arnold."

This proclamation was sent to the National printing-office, where it was falsified by the Central Committee. Instead of the words, "The deputies of Paris, the elected mayors and assistants reinstated in the Mairies of their arrondissements, and the members of the Central Committee, convinced, etc.," they wrote: "The Central Committee of the National Guard, around whom have rallied the deputies of Paris, the mayors and assistants, convinced, etc.; convoke, etc." They suppressed the signature of M. Callon, and added the signatures of Messieurs E. Ferry, André, Nast, assistants of the 9th; Poirier, assistant of the 11th; Sextius Michel, assistant of the 15th; Chanelet, assistant of the 16th; Lafond, Dereure, and Jaclard, assistants of the 18th arrondissement.

MM. Tirard, Arnaud de l'Ariége, and Brisson, who were informed at Versailles of the text of the agreement, declared that they would not assent to it.

M. André Murat addressed the following letter to all the editors of newspapers on the day of the vote :—

"At the commencement of the ballot and in presence of the monstrous fact that the text of the convention, signed by the mayors, their assistants the representatives of the people present in Paris, and MM. Ranvier and Arnold, members of the Central Committee, has been falsified, it becomes essential that the truth, with regard to the relations between the mayors and the Central Committee should be made known.

"On Sunday, the 19th, a deputation of mayors and deputies went to the Hôtel de Ville, to request the Central Committee to leave the general administration of the City of Paris, as well as that of their respective arrondissements, to the elected municipalities. After a long discussion, the Committee, wishing to consider the matter, the deputation retired to the Mairie of the 2nd, whither four delegates of the Committee came shortly afterwards, and there, by common consent, it was agreed that the Hôtel de Ville should be restored to a commission of the mayors on the following morning at nine o'clock; *this promise has not been kept.*

"After this refusal, and as it was impossible for the municipal officers to recognize the civil

authority of the Committee, they protested and were expelled one after another from their Mairies.

"On Friday, the situation being strained to its utmost, and the municipal officers making unheard-of efforts to induce the Government and the Assembly to accept the elections, which was a reasonable demand, General Brunel, one of the Committee, invested the Mairie of the 1st arrondissement, with several battalions and with cannon.

"There, and to avoid bloodshed, a compromise was made. The municipal officer agreed that the elections should be held on the 30th. The General then proceeded to the Mairie of the 2nd, and the mayors assembled there approved the fresh agreement. The Central Committee, repudiating the signature of its General, *refused to ratify it.*

"Once more negotiations were attempted with the object of conciliation, at first officiously and afterwards officially; and on Saturday at noon a notice was drawn up by the mayors, and accepted by the Central Committee.

"It might have been supposed that all was now settled, and, for my own part, I went to my Mairie at two o'clock to resume my duties and take the requisite measures for holding the elections on Sunday; but I was refused admittance,

the Central Committee declining to fulfil the agreement. In the evening a notice was posted by the said Committee, announcing that the mayors had joined with the Committee, *which is false*, and, still more to mislead the public, this notice was signed with our names.

"Such a violation of fixed agreements, and the affixing of our signatures to a proclamation which did not emanate from us, affords a measure of the morality of the Committee; and teaches us how much confidence should be placed in the good faith and honour of such people.

"A. MURAT,

"*Assistant-mayor of the 9th Arrondissement.*"

This letter, which does infinite honour to M. Murat, appeared in the morning. The same evening the Central Committee, unable to reply to it otherwise, put M. Murat in prison.

The mayors had gone very far in the way of concession. They had accepted the Central Committee if not as a regular at least as an honest authority; they had to a certain extent undertaken to put up with its vicinity, if only their Mairies were restored, and the administrative authority in all civil matters was left in their hands. As an answer to those proceedings, by far too conciliatory, the Committee deliberately committed a forgery, whose consequences involved no less than the dishonour

of the signatories of the proclamation. Nevertheless M. Murat was the only one to protest and to withdraw; his colleagues reserved their protest for a more favourable moment; thus adding another to the many sacrifices they had already made in the interest of the public peace.

It only remained now to vote.

The ballot was about to remove both the Central Committee and the mayors; the Committee who had made the insurrection of the 18th March, the mayors who had courageously struggled against its dictation, taking the lead at the same time in both conciliation and resistance. The party of order once more proved faithless to itself. The ballot, if all had done their duty, would have resulted in Peace; as it was, it resulted in the Commune.

M. Louis Blanc had proposed that the Assembly should resolve that the mayors of Paris, in approving the elections of the 26th, had acted like good citizens. The Report was made on the 27th, the day after the vote. The commission concluded against the consideration of the proposal. M. Thiers and M. Jules de Lasteyrie, President of the commission of fifteen members appointed to convey confidential communications between the Government and the Assembly during the insurrection, were the only members who spoke, and they merely begged the Assembly to vote

the conclusions of the commission without comment. The speech of M. Thiers, although short, is memorable. He treated those who accused him of wishing to overthrow the Republic as base calumniators. "I want," said he, "I want solely to establish the well-being of France. When that is done I will restore her to you with the form of Government she has to-day. The different parties may then discuss what her final form shall be. All will depend on how each party conducts itself until then. The victory will be with the wisest." Returning to the question, he confined himself to declaring that France should not be oppressed by Paris, nor Paris by France, that all the communes of France, Paris included, should enjoy their full rights and the plenitude of their liberty. He begged the Assembly to attend without delay to the municipal Act.

M. Jules de Lasteyrie did not intend to fail in the discretion that M. Thiers expected from the members of the Commission. His concluding phrase, however, allowed the policy of the Government to be divined; while maintaining the principles of order and legality they did not wish to discourage any efforts which tended to prevent bloodshed. "We will not," he said, "hinder any moderate or conciliatory measure, but we say to the Government: if ever crime, pillage or assassination run riot

in Paris Versailles had better be ready." Scarcely had the Assembly closed the discussion by refusing to take the proposition of M. Louis Blanc into consideration, when M. Louis de Saint Pierre presented a protest, signed by eighty-one deputies, against the elections of the day before. The Assembly being consulted, urgency was refused. All sensible men, even on the Right, appreciated the danger of public discussions at such a moment. The proposal of M. Louis Blanc had been inspired by a right sentiment, it expressed nothing but what was perfectly just. But officially to approve of the mayors for having advised the vote would have been to approve the vote itself, and to give a sort of sanction to the Commune.

Every one understood and every one felt that, notwithstanding the vote of the 27th, the mayors of Paris were regarded with esteem by the Government, the Assembly, and all patriots.

The Central Committee, on the contrary, was held up, by all its actions, to the contempt of history.

Appointed originally by several battalions of the National Guard, to occupy itself exclusively with the interests of the National Guard, it should merely have expressed a desire that all the officers should be elected; it did, however, quite another thing; it decided that the officers should be elected; and this was usurping legislative authority. It

declared that it would not obey the commanders regularly appointed by the Government; and this was placing itself in a state of rebellion. The men who would not have any but elected chiefs, and who made, according to their own statement, a revolution on that account, appointed generals on their own authority; these were Garibaldi, Cluseret, Bergeret, Eudes, Duval, Henry, Gasnier, Brunel, Raoul du Bisson. Flourens having appointed himself according to his usual custom, the Committee hastened to provide him with a command.

The Committee had, since February, been demanding the cannon which were given by the National Guard during the siege. This was its first move. It claimed them as the property of the National Guard; an unsound reason, for there cannot be proprietorship in an object which has been given away. With a view to conciliation it was proposed to the Committee that the cannon should not indeed be restored *en masse* to the National Guard, but that the pieces which had been purchased by each, should be given back to that battalion individually. This did not suit the purposes of the Committee. It wanted cannons; got them, and with them, projectiles which the National Guard had never given, but which it awarded to itself. Barricades were erected around the parks of artillery, and the cannons were turned upon the city. In this same month of February the drums beat to

arms by order of the Committee: this was insubordination and usurpation. Mazas, Sainte-Pelagie, and La Santé were attacked, and the prisoners released, of some of whom the Committee afterwards made generals.

On the 12th of March a notice was posted on the walls of Paris which was a provocation to the soldiers to rebel.

On the 18th a federal battalion was made to march against the line, and a troop of women brought down from the heights of Montmartre and Belleville, who crowded round the soldiers, broke through their ranks, and incited them first to disobedience and afterwards to desertion. Members of the Committee visited the barracks, gave the soldiers wine, and either took or bought their muskets. At the meeting held on the 22nd March at the Hôtel de Ville, "Citizen Viard, having proposed that secret emissaries should be sent to Versailles in order to instruct the troops in their true duty," Citizen Assi, the President, replied that "emissaries had been sent several days before." The Committee proceeded from enlistment by bribery to enlistment by force. A decree of 22nd March declares that "The soldiers at present in Paris shall be incorporated in the National Guard, and shall receive its allowances."

It was asserted that the Committee had not ordered the assassination of Clément Thomas and

Lecomte; but the Committee called this assassination "an execution," and undertook to defend it. The promised inquiry into the circumstances was not made. Several of those who had been conspicuous on the occasion, received promotion; Captains Ras and Herpin Lacroix were made majors; Captain Simon Mayer was made Commandant of the Place Vendôme; Kadanski, a carpenter, who had been foremost in the proceedings at the guard-house of the Rue de Rosiers, was promoted to the staff. Verdagner, a sergeant of the line, who was one of the first to go over to the insurrection, and who boasted that he had fired at General Lecomte, obtained command of a battalion.

The Committee made no trouble about justifying or even provoking assassinations. The *Journal Officiel* of the 28th March contains the following note, which appears in the non-official portion.

"We reproduce the following article by Citizen Ed. Vaillant, which appears to us to meet one of the present difficulties in a satisfactory manner:—

"The Editor in chief of the *Journal Officiel*,

"CH. LONGUET."

This article, which "meets one of the present difficulties in a satisfactory manner," concludes with these words:—"Society has but one duty towards princes; to put them to death. One formality only is binding upon it, the establishment of identity. The Orleans are in France, the Bonapartes

want to return : let good citizens look to it ! " On the 31st March the *Journal Officiel* states that the reactionary journals made a great noise about this article. " This article being signed," it adds, " only expresses an individual opinion, an opinion which is besides very sustainable."

The Committee had fired on the people on the 22nd March, on an unarmed crowd, whose cry was *Vive la paix !* Apprised by the first demonstration, which had taken place the day before, and by the summons, which was public ; (proof enough that no idea of having recourse to force was entertained), it had charged Lullier and Moreau " to take measures to prevent this demonstration, *without bloodshed if possible*." At four o'clock a report from General du Bisson was brought to the Committee at the Hôtel de Ville (13 killed, 8 wounded), when " Citizen Avoine moved a vote of thanks to the General, and to all the staff who have deserved well of the country. The motion was carried unanimously."

The suppression of Courts Martial was also voted with unanimity. " Courts Martial can be nothing else than exceptional tribunals, where convictions are decided in advance : their justice is a deception. It is our duty to emancipate the army ; to its unity with the National Guard we owe the victory of liberty." The vote took place at the meeting of the 19th. The following sentence

occurs in the official Report of the meeting of the 23rd. "The Committee ratifies the condemnations to death pronounced the day before on the motion of Generals Henri and Du Bisson."

The Committee had placarded on the walls of the Hôtel de Ville: "Any person taken in the act of theft will be shot." The intention was praiseworthy, the penalty outrageous, and the procedure more than summary. Here is another notice:—

"The Central Committee have been informed that men wearing the uniform of the National Guard and recognized as former gendarmes and sergents-de-ville have fired on the Prussian lines. The Committee give notice that should a similar case present itself, they themselves will take measures to secure the guilty parties, who will be immediately shot." Thus, having suppressed the state of siege and the Courts Martial of the standing army, the Committee transformed itself into a High Court of Justice, enacted penalties, and carried them into effect. Newspaper editors were cautioned that if they had the misfortune to trip, they would be brought "before the Committee," and threatened with "severe penalties" should they again oppose the will of the people. Was it also a question of the recalcitrant journalists being shot?

The Committee (and this no one will be surprised to learn) held advanced opinions respecting the distribution of the public charges. On the

24th March the following curious statistics were published in the *Journal Officiel:* lucubrations of this calibre constitute what was pompously termed in the language of the clubs and of public meetings, "Science."

"In examining the working of our economical institutions, we find that the various fortunes are formed and developed in the following proportions:—one, two, four, eight, sixteen, and, in an inverse ratio, that the households possessing these various fortunes are in the proportions of sixteen, eight, four, two, one; it could not be otherwise; were it so, poverty or opulence would be general.

"The union of these two proportions constitutes that law which presides over the division of riches between the five ranks of the population, whose positions are as follows:—poor, tolerable, easy, rich, and opulent.

"The wealth of France (*mobilière and immobilière*) being nearly 310 Milliards, and the number of households, 13,950,000, a simple arithmetical calculation gives the following results:—

"First group, 7,200,000 families; indigent persons of all sorts, workers, at the lowest wages, possessing goods, and working tools, 10 Milliards.

"2nd group, 3,600,000; workmen possessing land or a trade which allows them to work on their own account, 20 Milliards.

"3rd group, 1,800,000; small bourgeoisie, retail traders, 40 Milliards.

"4th grade, 900,000; Middle class bourgeoisie, wholesale traders, 80 Milliards.

"5th group, 450,000; great proprietors, large capitalists, 160 Milliards."

Let, then, the fortunes of this latter class, composed for the most part of the organizers or the favourites of brigandage, be taxed at the rate of three to four per cent., and a sum sufficient to satisfy German rapacity will be realized immediately.

Citizen Grollard, member of the Committee, discovered a still simpler, and according to him, more practical way of paying the indemnity of five milliards; it was simply "to confiscate and sell for the profit of the Commune the goods of all the Deputies, Senators, and Ministers, who had voted for the war with Prussia."

Citizen Grêlier, "delegate to the Interior," who had a better notion of what a sum of five Milliards was, contented himself with announcing in the *Officiel*, "The authors of the war shall pay the greater portion of the ransom."

The Committee took the interests of house occupiers in hand. "Until further orders, and with the sole object of maintaining peace, house proprietors and hotel-keepers shall not have the

power of obliging occupiers of any houses or hotels to leave." This was not pleasant for proprietors and hotel-keepers; it simply condemned them, together with the authors of the war, to pay the indemnity. "Citizen Blanchet approves the motion for the sale of the goods of the Deputies, Senators, and Ministers," but he is of opinion that "in addition to this measure for the public safety, there should be a tax on the total amount of rents, whether paid or not.

"The motion is adopted; the amount of the tax shall be paid hereafter."

The winners of the day on the 18th March gave its true name to the Revolution, which they believed they had effectually made. They called it "the accession of the proletariat. "The proletariat has understood that it was its imperative duty and its absolute right to take its own destinies in hand, and to ensure their triumph by taking possession of authority."

The Committee had declared that the movement which had just taken place was purely municipal and purely local. Its next proceeding was the appointment of its ministers. It sent delegates to revolutionize Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, all the large towns.

Amoureux writes to the Committee from Lyons, on the 24th March, in the name of the delegates :—

"We arrived at Lyons, and immediately proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville. We have had to appear on the balcony, amid the acclamations of more than 20,000 citizens.

"Eighteen battalions out of 24 are happy to federalize themselves with the 215 battalions of Paris.

"The Government of Versailles is not recognized.

"In short, the cause of the people triumphs, and Paris alone is recognized as the capital."

The Committee said, in its *Journal Officiel*, "It is on Paris that the duty of making the sovereignty of the people respected, and of exacting that no attempt upon their rights shall be made, is incumbent." It regarded the people of Paris as invested with the right of governing France, in virtue of their advanced opinions. This, at least, was the opinion of General Cluseret. "The source of all power and the only power in Paris," said he, "is you, National Guards of the Seine, you, the advanced people." The Committeé reckoned on the press, on the "enlightened or undeceived" departments; it also reckoned on the large towns to push forward the smaller ones.

"The large towns have proved that they are animated by the same republican spirit as Paris; the new Republican authorities hope, therefore, that they will afford her their earnest and ener-

getic co-operation." True, the Committee adds scornfully: "The country-places will be anxious to imitate the towns."

It had declared, from the 20th March, that it would ensure respect for the preliminaries of peace; an admirable resolution on the part of a Committee which had so many times expressed itself in favour of "torrential" sorties and war *à outrance*, and which had treated the surrender of Paris and these very same preliminaries of peace (which were to be so scrupulously respected), as so many betrayals and money-bargains. The Prussian general who commanded the third army corps at Compiègne, having announced that if events should assume an appearance of hostility against the German troops, the city of Paris would be treated as an enemy, the Committee hastened to reply that "the Revolution accomplished in Paris being essentially communal," could be in no way aggressive to the German armies.

General Von Schlotheim, in the note addressed by him to the leaders of the insurrection, promised to keep a *pacific* attitude if not provoked. The Committee in publishing this document altered the words to a *friendly* attitude, and ventured to say, in its proclamation of the 24th March,—"The Prussians, judging us at our

true worth, have recognized our right." This was false, but even had it been true, there was dishonour in the utterance of such a statement. With equal veracity was it affirmed, in official proclamations, that the King was at Versailles, that the army of M. Thiers was composed of Pontifical Zouaves, and that it was commanded by Charette.

One day Assi said to his Committee, "The mayors and deputies of Paris deserve no confidence whatever; the ministers are rascals; the deputies ferocious imbeciles; it is impossible to place a shadow of confidence in such men." The mayors were treated accordingly. The Committee promises them, on 22nd March, at six o'clock in the evening, to give them up the Hôtel de Ville; at midnight it refuses. It consents, on the 24th, to fix the elections for the 30th; on the 25th, it alters the date to the 26th. It obtains the consent of the mayors to the elections of the 26th on condition of restoring their Mairies; but it falsifies the proclamation, the terms of which had been settled by both, it does not keep to its word in the restitution of the Mairies, so that the first line of the proclamation, "The mayors, reinstated in their Mairies," constitutes a falsehood. It declares on the 19th, 20th, 21st, 24th, and 26th March, that it is about to retire,

that it is retiring, that it is giving place to the Commune; but it draws up lists of official candidates, on which it takes good care to inscribe the names of all its members. When the Commune is nominated and installed, instead of disappearing, the Committee transforms itself into a Subcommittee, retaining Assi as its President, and it only awaits an opportunity of seizing power once more. Such is the Central Committee of the National Guard.

Those who gained admission to the hall in the Hôtel de Ville, in which the Central Committee sat, carried away with them a feeling of disgust almost amounting to horror. It was very little like a Government Council; nay, not even like a guard-room. Victuals everywhere, drink, pipes, slovenly fellows with muskets slung at their backs, disgusting dirt, deafening cries, wild and ferocious talk. One member of the Committee, according to a witness hardly to be suspected, has a pleasant trick of pointing his loaded musket at you the whole time he is speaking to you; he replaces it under his arm while you answer him. It is grotesque, no doubt; is it only that? Is it not the indication of a peculiar mental condition? From this congenial centre came apologies for assassination, and provocations to civil and social war. Monsieur Tirard said on the 21st March,

from the tribune in the Assembly: "On going to the Hôtel de Ville, you know well enough when you enter it, but you know not whether you will come out again."

The elections did not fulfil the hopes either of the Committee or of the mayors.

The mayors had flattered themselves that the party of order would vote, and that it would vote with uniformity; but the party of order almost entirely abstained from voting. The adversaries of the Committee who voted, could only succeed in electing sixteen of their candidates. The game was lost, the sixteen elected candidates at once tendered their resignation. The Commune, after these resignations, and after taking some double elections into account, found itself reduced to sixty-six members; after the 6th April, by reason of fresh resignations, the number fell to sixty-two.

The Central Committee had succeeded with only thirteen of its members. It might, however, count as belonging to it the seventeen members elected from the International. This made, in all, thirty-eight members, for two of those elected, Varlin and Assi, belonged at the same time to the Central Committee and to the International Association. The other members of the Commune were journalists of the school of Delescluze

or Blanqui, or else club-orators. This result was vexatious to the Committee, who foresaw antagonism between its policy and a majority with Delescluze at its head.

But if instead of counting the elected, we consider the number of voters, the results prove that the party for order was once more beaten through its own fault.

The number of registered voters was 481,970. Of this number, 224,197 electors, that is forty-six per cent. of the total, had taken part in the election; 89,731 voters had given their votes to the sixteen elected in opposition to the Revolution of the 18th March, who resigned immediately. These 89,731, added to 257,773, who abstained from voting, formed a total of 347,504 out of 482,970 registered electors. We must also deduct from the voters who remained faithful to the Central Committee, those who gave their votes to former members of the corporations who had not accepted the candidateship. M. Hérisson, 2279; M. Jozon, 2202; Dr. Loiseau, 4849; M. Carnot, 1922; M. Denormandie, 1806, &c., &c.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMUNE.

After the ballot of the 26th March, an important Paris newspaper expressed regret that it had not urged its friends to take part in the election. Everybody was saying that if the party of order had not deserted on the 18th "in the street," or on the 26th at the ballot, the Commune would never have existed.

No one could think of regarding the summoning of the electors as a regular proceeding.

In the first place, it was done by the Central Committee, which asserted that it had been elected by the majority of the National Guard. As a matter of fact this was not proved, as a matter of right the National Guard could not have nominated it except in defiance of the laws. This Committee, whose very origin was seditious, had accumulated seditious acts for several weeks past.

If the members who composed it had been prosecuted, even before the 18th March, they would justly and infallibly have been condemned. On the 18th they had offered armed resistance to the lawful authority of the country. They had enticed away soldiers; they had laid hands on war-material belonging to the State; they had shut their eyes to the assassination of the two generals, an assassination committed by their partisans, and in their *Journal Officiel* they had published an apology for the crime. They had usurped authority and appointed functionaries to fill public offices. They had laid hands on the finances of the city and on those of the State. They had substituted the red flag for the national standard. These criminals committed one more crime by convoking the electors. To answer to their summons, to place the voting-papers in the ballot-box presented by their hands, was not this to give their approval to the revolt? How was a man to vote, and then allege, after the vote, the nullity of the operation? How was he to contest the authority of the Central Committee after having voluntarily submitted to it? These reasons were insuperable, in the sight of the Assembly and the Government which had sprung from universal suffrage, and who who could not bend the nation's will to a handful

of factious men. What then would have become of universal suffrage after such an abasement, and of France after the fall of universal suffrage? It will be remarked that Admiral Saisset, when resigning his function as general-in-chief of the National Guard, alleged as his principal motive the conduct of the mayors, who, by signing the last summons to the electors in common with the insurgents, appeared to acquiesce in what had been done on the 18th March, and since.

On the other hand, that which was impossible for the Government and the Assembly, might be held not to be so in the same degree for the mayors of Paris and for ordinary citizens. The mayors looked upon the participation of honest citizens in the election which was about to take place, not as an admission of the legality of the vote, but as the sole means of throwing light upon the situation by the enumeration of the votes. They were well aware that the ballot would give no rights to anybody. If, indeed, there were but this one way of preventing civil war, at a time when civil war might be the end of France, was it permissible, was it possible not to make use of it? Under what circumstances, if not under these, was "force majeure" to be pleaded? It is indisputable that if all the friends of order had voted, the Insurrection of the 18th

March would have ended, after a reign of eight days, in an overwhelming and irremediable defeat. The Central Committee which on the 18th had had defection for it, would have had on the 26th election against it. More than two-thirds of Paris voting against disorder would have been at once the proclamation of right, and the irresistible evidence of strength. The Commune would have perished unborn. The Assembly, victorious without a conflict, would have been entitled to be merciful. It might have punished the leaders of the rebellion and the assassins, ignored all the rest, given a liberal constitution to the city of Paris, and without even taking the trouble to annul the elections of the 26th, held the regular elections without delay. Unfortunately, only a half resolution had been taken, and that was the very worst thing that could have happened. Either all should have abstained out of respect for legality, or all should have voted out of respect for human life. Entire abstention, which would have been preferable because it alone was conformable with legality, with eternal justice, and also because it would have clearly proved the numerical weakness of the insurgents, could not be obtained; no one had sufficient authority to insist upon it; the mayors had felt their way, and ascertained that many of the enemies of

the Commune were resolved to vote. They met every argument with the three words: "We shall vote!" Certainly three of the mayors themselves, perhaps five, were of one opinion. As the abstention could not be otherwise than partial, they resolved upon action, but they did not succeed any better in establishing discipline in that sense. They were unable to state the motives of their conduct; the newspapers were divided, and the population imitated the newspapers. The absentees had not returned; among those present, a large number had persisted in abstaining; finally, the voters had not agreed to a single list of candidates. This disarray and inertness in the party of order contrasted singularly with the spirit of decision and discipline which was conspicuous among their adversaries at that time. After the victory all was changed: their Assembly and their party fell into unutterable disorder from the first.

Not one half of the voters on the registers voted. According to the decree of convocation, ninety were to be elected; there were only eighty-six. Of this number, sixteen members, belonging to the party of order, resigned their seats so soon as the result was known. MM. Ranc, Ulysse Parent, Robinet, Lefèvre, and Goupil, withdrew on the 6th April. There were three double

elections. The Assembly thus found itself reduced to sixty-two members. These sixty-two, some of whom had not even obtained a number of votes equal to the eighth part of the registered electors, met together; declared themselves regularly constituted; and announced that further elections to the vacant seats would take place at an early date.

Their first act was to proclaim the Commune, and to concentrate the whole public authority in the Commune. It was no longer pretended that nothing beyond municipal franchises for Paris was claimed. The elections over, this comedy became useless. The *Journal Officiel* declared that "it would be a strange and even a puerile fallacy to think that the sole aim of the Revolution of the 18th March was to secure a communal representation by election, but subject to a central despotic power for Paris." A puerile fallacy indeed; it was in fact a government that had just been formed; a government with very vague aspirations, very positive hatreds, and absolutely ignorant of the first principles of administration.

The Central Committee, to which the victory of the Commune had administered a personal check, by the defeat of the greater number of its members, allowed itself at least the pleasure of installing its successors with great pomp and a grand display

of red flags and red sashes fringed with gold. Assi officiated pontifically on this occasion, as chief of the government which was disappearing or was pretending to disappear. There were repeated salvoes of artillery, and "Vive la Commune!" was shouted in the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville during one whole day. The Commune declared that the Central Committee had deserved well of the country. After having congratulated and complimented each other, and enjoyed themselves, it was necessary to come to business; for they were but half masters of Paris, and at the gates of Paris they had the Prussians on one side and Versailles on the other.

The members of the Commune had to stand a siege, to raise an army, and to find generals. They had no money. They had to create a government, and to get it obeyed by that half of Paris which had just voted against them. Moreover, from the very first day there were profound divisions among them. They agreed only upon that one word, the "Commune," and each understood it after his own fashion. They well knew what they were fighting against; but they had only confused, wild, and diverging notions of what it was their business to found. Among their number there was a Prussian, a bankrupt ex-capuchin, an ex-

agent of the Imperial police, a mountebank, an assassin who had been convicted and condemned, a madman, a visionary. In such hands had our misfortunes placed us. Under such conditions did the insurgents, with the boastfulness which is inherent to their party, and a little to our country, make sure of victory.

They proclaimed aloud that the people ought to march on Versailles. They had an axiom which had been preached to them in every key during the first siege, and which they would not now relinquish; it was that when the entire people move together they are absolutely and necessarily invincible. It was in virtue of this axiom that the Government of Defence was regarded as criminal; it had victory in its hands, if only it had chosen to open them; it would have been sufficient had it ordered a sortie *en masse*. So it was now, the Commune had only to hurl the people against "the rustics." The army would not even offer any resistance. The soldiers are our brothers! They had proved this on the 18th March. Towards the end of the Central Committee, there had been, it was admitted, some difficulties in the interior of Paris; the battalions that had remained faithful to the Assembly had formed, under the orders of Admiral Saisset, a small army which occupied the Bourse and the

neighbouring streets, the Saint-Lazare Railway Terminus, and the quarters of the Elysée and Passy; but the Admiral, it was said, disheartened by the ill success of his proclamation and the small number of his adherents, had relinquished the struggle on the very day of the election, and returned to Versailles after having disbanded his troops; there was therefore nothing more to fear in the city; the Revolution was sole ruler; the road to Versailles was open. Was the Commune about to imitate Trochu, and condemn the National Guard to inaction and defeat? This question was asked on the boulevards, in the barracks, in the clubs, in the cafés and beer-shops. The newspapers of the Insurrection repeated it. Armed detachments defiled before the Hôtel de Ville, shouting, "À Versailles!" just as they had formerly shouted, "À Berlin!" Groups of women accompanied them, determined also to fight and to conquer. The Commune hesitated, estimating more correctly the gravity and difficulty of the enterprise. In what the rash believed to be an army, they could see only a mob. There was no lack of generals, there was even a crowd of them; Delescluze and a few others questioned whether these generals were capable of commanding an army, a battalion, or even a squad.

The Central Committee had intrusted all the military authority to three generals of its own creation: Brunel, Eudes, and Duval. The first had been a sub-lieutenant in the Chasseurs d'Afrique for a short time in his youth; Eudes was a young man, thirty-two years of age, formerly a medical student, afterwards an assistant in a shop, and manager of the *Libre Pensée;* Duval, after having tempted fortune as an iron-founder, had set up at last as a dealer in slippers. This trinity inspired unlimited confidence among that section of the National Guard which believed in improvised generals and the irresistibility of "torrential" sorties. The Commune, or rather the Executive Commission placed at its head, was less credulous, and consequently in less of a hurry. It was thinking of organizing the government, the finances, and the army, and making a selection from among the generals, when hostilities broke out without its order, on the 2nd of April, owing to an unforeseen accident.

A federal column was proceeding along the great avenue which leads straight to Courbevoie, and marching on Versailles at hap-hazard. General Vinoy sent a division, and two brigades to intercept them. The place of rendezvous assigned by him was the cross-roads at Bergères, where they arrived at eleven o'clock in the morn-

ing. Dr. Pasquier, surgeon-in-chief to the army of Versailles, a very distinguished man, and most popular with the soldiers, had set out in the morning alone, on horseback, and unarmed, to organize the medical service. He was riding along the high road to St. Germain, between the cross-roads at Bergères and the cross-roads at Courbevoie, when he came within reach of a federal outpost, which fired on him and killed him. It was generally reported that evening at Versailles, and was contradicted by nobody, that he had voluntarily gone to meet the insurgents, to entreat them not to fire upon the army and to return to Paris. However this may have been, the murder of a doctor before fighting had begun, aroused the anger of the regiment, which at that very moment was arriving on the scene of the occurrence, and perhaps contributed to confirm its loyalty. General Vinoy at once gave orders to attack, and the firing began vigorously on both sides. The insurgents showed great courage, but they could not stand against superior forces. General de Gallifet's cannon completely settled the fate of the day. In the twinkling of an eye the avenue was covered with runaways, who were swept down by a battery set up at the cross-roads at Courbevoie. The barricade commanding the bridge at Neuilly was stormed by sailors and

marines. At three o'clock the fight was over, and the troops were ordered to return to their encampment.

The effect of this day was very great at Versailles. It was known that the army had been remodelled with marvellous rapidity; its *morale* had been restored by the earnestness of its officers, and the attentive and minute care with which its welfare was studied. But there is always a doubt of the steadiness of troops which have not been under fire, and this is far more emphatically the case in civil war. After the 2nd April, it was known that the officers would be obeyed, and every one understood that victory was now only a matter of time.

In Paris, the numerous spectators of the rout, who crowded the top of the Arc-de-l'Etoile, knew perfectly well what to believe; but in the distant quarters, where information was uncertain and contradictory, the populace wanted to believe in success. Some members of the Commune broke in upon the sitting crying, "Victory! victory!" Delescluze made them hold their tongues, and brought them to a sense of the reality.

In the night, the three generals, that is to say, Brunel, Eudes, and Duval, presented themselves before the Executive Commission.

They came to propose a plan for marching

once more upon Versailles and making themselves masters of the Assembly.

The plan was extremely simple. The National Guard was to be divided into three corps; the first was to leave by the Vaugirard gate, and to direct its course on Versailles, by Issy, Châtillon, Sèvres, and Meudon; the second was to follow the road to Courbevoie, Puteaux, and Buzenval; the third was to reach Rueil, after passing beneath Mont Valérien. The composition and the strength of the three army corps had not been fixed upon; the topography of the environs of Versailles was almost unknown; whether the army had constructed any works, or whether it occupied those made by the Prussians; where its outposts were to be found; all this was uncertain. The three generals being convinced, in spite of the events of the day before, that the army would fraternize with the National Guard, were not even afraid of passing within range of the guns of Mont Valérien. They talked of the expedition as of a promenade.

The Executive Commission was far from sharing their opinion. It charged them to wait, and to do nothing until they should have received its orders and those of the Commune. Although it bore in mind the failings of the 18th March, and could not know the prodigies accomplished at

Satory by the combined activity of M. Thiers, the generals, and all our officers, it knew what effect "first blood" has on the spirit of two armies face to face, it was aware that the superiority of numbers may be more than balanced by discipline and strategy; that the very fact of numbers without order and without skilful handling is a cause of weakness, above all in a conflict with artillery; and it was alarmed by the aspect of its own troops, and the incredible *naïveté* of its generals. Delescluze spoke to them severely, and counted on being obeyed. Neither the Commune nor the Commission believed in any immediate aggressive movement.

But the faubourgs and the revolutionary quarters of Paris had smelt gunpowder. The clubs were crammed; open-air orators were ranting in every street. Nearly all affirmed that a first victory had been gained over "the soldiers of Cathelineau and Charette." A company of Bellevillites who had been well beaten, and who (rare exception) admitted the fact, were threatened with the severest punishments "for having spread false news, and attempted to chill the ardour of the citizens." Perhaps after all, for they did not mind making so much of a concession, "the victory of the 2nd April" was not decisive; but why? Because all the battalions had not

been employed; the sortie had not been "torrential." In order that this time due warning should be given, drums beat to arms all night long. The zones were besieged by processions which followed each other without an interval; women figuring in them in large numbers, some of them with muskets and in uniform. About four o'clock in the morning companies with their ranks nearly full arrived from all parts. Wending their way to the ramparts, they hastened to remount the guns, and to get them into position by manual labour. They demanded or rather they exacted ammunition. As for provisions and ambulances, only a few officers gave them a thought.

The Commune, unwilling to begin the struggle without due preparation, but who had not foreseen this movement, had inflamed the maddened population by the following proclamation, which was posted at nightfall:—

"To the National Guard of Paris.

"The Royalist conspirators have *attacked*.

"In spite of the moderation of our attitude, *they have attacked*.

"Being no longer able to reckon upon the French army, they have *attacked* with Pontifical Zouaves and the Imperial police.

"Not content with cutting off our communica-

tions with the provinces, and with making vain efforts to reduce us by famine, these madmen have resolved to imitate the Prussians to the end, and bombard the capital.

"This morning the Chouans of Charette, the Vendéens of Cathelineau, the Bretons of Trochu, flanked by Valentin's Gendarmes, have covered the inoffensive village of Neuilly with shells and grapeshot, and entered into a civil war with our National Guard.

"There have been some killed and wounded.

"Elected by the population of Paris, our duty is to defend the great city against these culpable aggressors. With your help, we shall defend it.

"The Executive Commission."

The sense of the responsibility of "entering into civil war" had come rather late to the Commission. It wanted to throw that responsibility on the Government; which was pushing the audacity of falsehood very far. Had not the authors of the 18th March "entered upon civil war"? Ought France to have done nothing? If the affair of the 2nd April only be taken into consideration, in good sooth, the aggression had not come from its side. The first shot had killed Doctor Pasquier; the Versailles army had responded to that by a general attack.

Moreover, what was that swarm of National Guards which was spread over the Avenue de la Grande-Armée, the high street and the bridge at Neuilly? Whither was it going? To Versailles. Its march was the most formal of aggressions; and had there only been that, the aggression came from the Commune, and the Assembly and the Government did but defend themselves. But it was not on the 2nd April that France was attacked for the first time; she had been already attacked on the 18th March, and even before the 18th.

If on the 2nd April the Assembly had commenced the attack first, it would have only employed its right. There were many who held that it was too long to have waited fourteen days, and that the attack ought to have been begun on the 19th. At Versailles, this was the opinion of all those who imagined that General Vinoy had brought back real soldiers and a real army from Paris, during the night of the 18th and 19th. The complaints of the Executive Commission were as legitimate as those of a man who, having stabbed you with a dagger and against whom you were defending your life, should say to you, "you attack me."

Had the election of the 26th perchance changed

the reciprocal position of the parties? Had it effaced the rights created by the election of the 10th February? This was indeed the assertion made by the Commune, and it must be admitted that there never was a more outrageous one. The members of the Commune, elected on the 26th March, in virtue of an illegal and culpable summons, by a quarter at most of the population of Paris, if the votes given to the party of order were taken into account, affected to call themselves the elect of the people, the representatives of the national will; not only did they oppose their pretended right to that of the National Assembly elected by the rest of France, and by Paris itself; but they said, and seemed to believe, that it was the duty of the Assembly to retire before them, and disappear. This incredible sophism is to be found in every proclamation issued by them in a space of two months. Three days after the entry of the troops into Paris, when their fall was an accomplished fact, they offered to "resign" on condition that the National Assembly should resign simultaneously. A certain number of "conciliators" whom by-and-by we shall see at work, held very similar language, or at any rate, made similar proposals. From its origin, the Central Committee had treated the resistance of the mayors as rebellion against the will of the

People. In the proclamations the "insurgents" of Versailles were glibly spoken of.

It is certain that Versailles did not begin the attack on the 2nd April; but not only had it the right to attack, it was bound to do so, and was about to fulfil that duty, when the murder of Dr. Pasquier precipitated events. M. Thiers had only left Paris on the 16th March, in order to retake the city by persuasion or by force. The Assembly was beginning to blame his tardiness when March ended; but he, firm in his resolutions, knowing perfectly what he wanted, incapable of allowing himself to be carried away by vain impulses, had resolved that he would not bring the army into action until he had remodelled it. He had enlarged and improved the huts at Satory; he had quartered the army there, and isolated it; he had made its officers camp out with their men; he had personally inspected the quantity and good quality of the provisions; he had increased the rations; he had repaired the equipment, being well aware that a well-clothed soldier, wearing a regular uniform, is better disposed to submit to discipline and to like it. He visited the camp daily, and displayed in his inspections and his conversations with the officers as much solicitude and variety of knowledge as their own. It is but just to say that he was seconded with patriotic

devotion by all our officers, from the general-in-chief down to the youngest sub-lieutenant. He did justice to the activity and ability of our officers. All who were near him during these days of mortal anxiety heard him speak over and over again, with deep feelings of hope and admiration, of the rapid transformation of our army. This had been evident from the very first, but it progressed with giant's strides so soon as the recruits, brought back from Paris on the 19th of March had been formed into companies and battalions, with the help of the old regiments which the enemy gave back to us or those which were summoned from the departments. "Nothing," said M. Thiers, "is a stronger proof of the amount of power and vitality in our country." In spite of this, he was in no hurry to commence the conflict; he dreaded the first fire. He was now no longer in doubt respecting the prowess of the army, but he was still a little suspicious of its goodwill. All was decided by that first shot, fired before the engagement, which killed an officer, a doctor, a man who was beloved and popular. From that moment, until the end of the campaign, the difficulty was not to excite the ardour of the troops, but to restrain it. This is the history of civil wars; brothers perhaps, before the battle; after the first blood, enemies.

The Federal Generals, without heeding the orders of the Executive Commission, and obeying the manifestations of the faubourgs, had sent their army forward, very early on the 3rd April. Bergeret and Flourens commanded two columns, which were to unite at Neuilly; Duval and Eudes took the road by Vaugirard. Each battalion joined the general whom it preferred; Flourens, whose prestige was immense, and whose popularity was of long standing, since it was six months old, had the largest body of men with him. The commandant of Mont Valérien estimated the forces that marched under the command of Flourens at 30,000 men. This mass of men dragged with it three field-pieces, and advanced without order, at random, full of foolish confidence. The insurgents had counted on the neutrality and complicity of Mont Valérien, and were near the cross-roads of Bergères, when the fortress opened fire with terrible effect. Half the insurgents took to their heels and ran away, re-entering Paris by the Neuilly road; the remainder endeavoured to make a stand, and pointed their three guns against the fort; but the artillery dismounted two of their cannon, and scattered the men in all directions. A considerable number, however, formed again on the near side of the hill, and pushed on as far as Reuil, making a dash

on Bougival, six kilometers from Versailles. There they were surrounded by several divisions of the army, and fled helter-skelter from the heavy fire of the artillery. The cavalry division under General Du Preuil charged the fugitives in the open plain that extends from Nanterre to Reuil. It was during this charge that Gustave Flourens was met by some gendarmes in a house at Chatou, on the banks of the Seine. He shot the first who presented himself, and was cut down by a captain.

The columns that had followed Eudes and Duval by the Versailles gate reached Meudon, but could not maintain themselves there. They were dislodged from this position by the Republican Guard and the La Mariouse Brigade, and forced to retreat in disorder on Châtillon. Another band of Federals had pushed as far as the hamlet of Villacoublay; but they were put to rout by General Derroja and the Pellé Division, and thrown back on the Châtillon redoubt, where they arrived towards night. The attempt of the Federals on Versailles, in spite of the courage displayed by a large number of them on the battle-field, had failed miserably, as was to be expected, owing to the presumption and utter incapacity of their generals. The defeat was too complete to be remediable. Nevertheless, the dis-

orderly crowds had very nearly reached Versailles, since they had even for a moment occupied Bougival, Villacoublay, and the heights of Meudon. Had they been better led, they might have become a serious danger for the Assembly. M. Thiers gave orders to General Vinoy to take possession of the plateau of Châtillon, and to occupy Gennevilliers in force. The General became master of the plateau on the 4th April, after an obstinate fight, in which the unfortunate Duval, one of the generals improvised by the Commune, was killed.

It is related that the general-in-chief, on reaching the battle-field, observed several prisoners, among whom one was pointed out to him as Duval. He called him out of the ranks, and addressed him, "How would you treat me if I were in your place?" "I would have you shot." "Lead him to the wall" Between them and the wall there was a ditch; Duval jumped nimbly across, turned composedly round to the firing-party, and fell, crying, "Long live the Commune!" This was a hero's death. The dialogue is apocryphal; but Duval's courageous death is a well-established fact. The war had lasted but for two days as yet, but it already had every horror.

Gennevilliers cost more time and trouble to take than the plateau of Châtillon. It had to be

won by a series of very deadly little fights, which were going on from the 5th to the 10th April.

On the 10th April the operation was concluded by the occupation of Asnières, where the troops of General Ladmirault established themselves. The line of outposts of the army of Versailles was then stretched all along the Seine from St. Denis, where it bordered on the Prussian outposts, as far as Lower Meudon. The insurgents could no longer attempt any movement on Versailles, and found themselves reduced to a defensive war.

Two great facts were established by those few days' fighting; that Paris, during the second siege, as in the first, having no army to relieve it from without, could defend itself but not attack; and that the Insurrection had formidable artillery, skilful gunners, and intrepid soldiers. The war, under these circumstances, must inevitably be a long one.

It is true that the Commune was heaping blunder on blunder The first, from a military point of view, was its having kept the generals of the Central Committee, and not having known how to make them obey it on 3rd April. The Executive Commission, warned by its first disasters, hastily took some indispensable precautions.

This Commission, when first formed, included the citizens Eudes, Tridon, Vaillant, Lefrançais, Duval, Felix Pyat, and Bergeret. Properly speaking, it was to constitute the government. Nine other commissions represented the ministries, and each one had a delegate, whose office was almost that of a minister. The seven members who composed the first Executive Commission had not been selected for their military knowledge. Eudes, Duval, and Bergeret had the title of general; it had either been given them, or they had assumed it. Eudes we know. Duval, first a workman, and afterwards a petty shopkeeper, had never served except in the National Guard. He was scarcely thirty years old. He knew not how to command, but he showed that he knew how to die. Bergeret, who also was only thirty-two years of age, had been, it is said, a stable-boy. Yet he could not ride on horseback, and marched to victory in a cab. He had, moreover, been a printer's reader, which implies that he had at least some amount of education. He was a sergeant in the National Guard; and had held the same rank in the army. From a sergeant he became a general, and even a minister, for he was Minister of War for a short period. Their four colleagues in the commission were all civilians. Tridon, aged thirty, a man of considerable

property, and some distinction in literature, was a disciple of Blanqui; Vaillant, aged thirty, was a physician, an engineer, formerly a student at the Universities of Heidelberg, Vienna, and Tubingen, a very learned man, who had been unable to adopt either a country, a career, or a doctrine, unless perhaps it were the philosophy of Hegel, and who seemed to have returned to France only to become a member of the International Association, the Central Committee, and the Commune: it was he who said: "The sole debt of society to princes is death." Lefrançais was an ex-tutor, and an ex-merchant, a sincere and ardent Republican, concerned in all the disturbances, one of the orators of the Paris clubs; finally, Felix Pyat was the celebrated author of some declamatory dramas and some violent pamphlets. When a representative of the people in 1848, he had sat with the party of the "Montagne," and was one of those condemned in June in the affair of the Arts-et-Métiers, in which Ledru Rollin was implicated. As a journalist during the siege, he attacked the Government of Defence, and demanded the "torrential" sortie. Elected a deputy in 1871, he appeared at Bordeaux only to declare the Assembly dissolved, by reason of its vote on the preliminaries of peace. He was sixty-one years of

age, six years older than Lefrançais, and the senior member of the Executive Commission. Such was the Government which wanted to impose itself upon France, and had to sustain the war against the army of Versailles.

It was assisted in the latter task by the Military Commission, which, like the other, was somewhat ill-composed. We find in it first of all the three generals Eudes, Bergeret, and Duval, (Duval had just died on the field of battle,) then Flourens, who had also been killed in the first engagement. The latter was the son of a famous scholar, a scholar himself, for a time his father's substitute at the Collége de France, fond of revolutions and adventures, of which he went in search as far as Crete, the idol of the Belleville people, a little mad, very dangerous, but never wicked. It was he who asked General Trochu to give up to him the command of the army. "It is our only means of winning," he said; and he believed it.

The other members of the Military Commission were Pindy, Chardon, and Ranvier; Pindy was a working carpenter, and an influential member of the "Internationale;" Chardon had formerly been a tinker, but had enlisted during the siege in the cavalry of the republic; Ranvier was first a landscape painter without any talent, then a clever decorator; a great club-man, mayor of

Belleville for a short time during the siege, and afterwards one of the colonels of the Commune.

The Executive Commission had begun its series of military operations by decreeing the abolition of the conscription; a pure matter of form for people who had already suppressed the standing army. This decree is dated the 29th March. On 1st April a new decree, more important in its consequences, divided the command between the three generals, who were to make such a fine use of it on the morrow and the day following.

"Paris, 1st April, 1871.

"The Commune of Paris decrees:

"1st. The title and functions of Commander-in-chief are abolished.

"2nd. Citizen Brunel is removed from his post.

"3rd. Citizen Eudes is delegate for war, Bergeret, delegate for the staff of the National Guard, and Duval delegate for the military command of the ex-prefecture of police.

"The Executive Commission."

Brunel had written with his own hand, underneath an order from the Central Committee:—"This order, having been despatched without the authority of the commander-in-chief, is annulled." The Central Committee, whose

influence was all-powerful, could no longer bear either that title nor that man. The title was abolished, they were satisfied with placing the man on the unattached list. The Commune was still in its honeymoon. It treated Eudes and Bergeret, after their disobedience and the misfortunes of the 2nd and 3rd April, with similar gentleness. There was a sitting at the Hôtel de Ville on the 3rd, while the generals were marching on Versailles in contempt of express and formal orders. Delescluze had arrived in great excitement; he asked whether the generals were above the Executive Commission and the Commune? He quoted the opinion of Cluseret, who was saying everywhere, "The movement that has been commenced is mere childishness," and called for severe measures against the offenders. The majority assented to the charge of disobedience, but thought it was well done, as it would put an end to the Versailles insurrection in the course of the day. They read with enthusiasm despatche slike the following; which were sent to them by the generals.

"20 minutes past 11.

"Bergeret and Flourens have affected a junction; they are marching on Versailles. Certain success."

"2 o'clock.

"About four o'clock in the morning, the columns

commanded by General Bergeret and Colonel Flourens effected a junction at the cross-roads of Courbevoie. No sooner had they arrived than a heavy fire was opened upon them by Mont Valérien.

"The troops thereupon sheltered themselves behind walls and houses. Thus protected, the commanders were able to organize a movement which completely succeeded, and the two columns were able to clear the lines and set out on their march to Versailles.

"General Bergeret, at the head of his troops, led them on to the cry of 'Long live the Republic!' and has had two horses killed.

"The fire of the Versailles Army did not cause us any appreciable loss."

These audacious bulletins were contradicted one after another by fresh testimony, and before the end of the sitting it was known that the rout had been complete. Thereupon, Delescluze spoke again with renewed vigour, and imperatively demanded the dismissal of the generals, who had disobeyed the Commune and led its army to defeat. But the accused were popular among the National Guard and in the assembly which Delescluze was addressing. To condemn them, when their fault had been that of yielding to the patriotic ardour of the National Guard, was to condemn the National Guard itself! After a stormy debate, in which

Delescluze steadily held his ground against the majority, it was decided that the generals should be replaced in the Executive Commission, and, without their command being withdrawn from them, that Cluseret should be put over them as delegate for war. These changes were notified to them in the following letter, which does not contain one word of blame. At the time when it was written, Duval's death was not yet known. The successors of Eudes, Bergeret, and Duval in the Executive Commission were Delescluze, Cournet, and Vermorel.

"To Citizens Bergeret, Duval, and Eudes.

"Citizens,

"We have the honour to inform you that in order to allow you full liberty to conduct the military operations entrusted to you, the Commune has just appointed General Cluseret to the direction of the War department.

"The Assembly is convinced that, considering the gravity of the circumstances in which we are placed, it is important to establish unity in the administrative service of the war.

"The Commune also considers it indispensable provisionally to appoint others in your place in the Executive Commission, in the labours of which your military position no longer permits you to take an active part."

Delescluze, Vermorel, Felix Pyat, Cournet, Vaillant, Tridon: the Revolution of March 18th was ending in a Government of journalists. Lefrançais, who did not write for the papers, had been a schoolmaster. They were all bourgeois. Not one of them had any knowledge of military affairs.

After the double defeat of the 2nd and 3rd April, the first thought of the Commission and of the Commune was of revenge. MM. Thiers, Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, Dufaure, Jules Simon, and Admiral Pothuau, were impeached; and their property was sequestrated. That decree was but child's play; the following was quite different.

"The Commune of Paris,—

"Considering that the Government of Versailles openly tramples under foot the rights of humanity as well as those of war; that it is guilty of horrors with which not even the invaders of French soil are stained;

"Considering that it is the imperative duty of the representatives of the Commune of Paris to defend the honour and the life of 2,000,000 of inhabitants, who have placed the care of their destinies in their hands; and that it behoves them to take at once all measures which are necessitated by the situation;

"Considering that political men and city magistrates ought to reconcile the common weal with respect for public liberties;

"Decrees:

"Art. 1. All persons suspected of complicity with the Versailles Government shall be immediately accused and incarcerated.

"Art. 2. A jury of inquiry shall be appointed within the twenty-four hours, to investigate the crimes which shall be brought before it.

"Art. 3. The jury shall come to a decision within forty-eight hours.

"Art. 4. All accused persons who shall be detained by the jury of inquiry, shall be hostages of the people of Paris.

"Art. 5. Every execution of a prisoner of war, or of a partisan of the regular Government of the Commune of Paris, shall at once be followed by the execution of a triple number of hostages retained by virtue of Article No. 4, and for whom lots shall be drawn.

"Art. 6. Every prisoner of war shall be brought before the jury of inquiry, who shall decide whether he is to be set at liberty immediately, or detained as an hostage."

Messrs. Lanjalley and Corriez, the authors of "L'Histoire de la Révolution du 18 Mars," assert that this decree was the work of the

moderate members of the Commune, particularly of Delescluze, who was the wise and temperate one among them. He proposed it and had it voted, in order to prevent the Commune from immediately shooting a certain number of hostages, chosen in preference from among the clergy. They would have us believe that this savage decree was chiefly a clever device. It ordered assassination, but it set down rules for it; it permitted it to be adjourned. It gave to suspected persons the guarantee of a thorough investigation to be concluded within forty-eight hours, and the chance of the lot to those who were condemned to death. As a matter of fact, we shall see that the profound calculations of the "moderate" party were of no use. The carnage took place. There was no drawing of lots. Rigault and Ferré chose their victims arbitrarily. They killed in the heap.

It has been remarked as a strange coincidence that the same day (April 6th) on which the Commune promulgated this decree, the people were indulging themselves in burning the guillotine at the foot of the statue of Voltaire. The office of public executioner was abolished by decree. It was not the first time that ferocity and philanthropy had been seen in company. As under the Reign of Terror, so under the Commune there were

proscribers who were philanthropists at the same time. The difference between the two periods rests chiefly in the instrument. The Reign of Terror abused the guillotine; the Commune burned it; but then, the Commune had its firing-party.

While it threatened the "Royalists" of Versailles with terrible reprisals, the Commune issued a decree by which it adopted the families of citizens who had fallen or might fall in its defence. It promised their widows a pension of 600 francs. In the excess of its sensibility it extended its solicitude to the families of "Versaillais," who were left in Paris unprovided for, while their heads were fighting under the orders of Charette and Cathelineau, declaring that "the Republic had help for all widows, and kisses for all orphans."

Cluseret, whom the Commune had just called to the management of the war, was an adventurer, but he was not incapable like his brother-generals. He was not a member of the Commune at the time of his nomination as delegate for war, nor until the supplementary elections; but it was felt that improvised generals would no longer do. Educated at St. Cyr, major in the Garde Mobile in 1848, captain in the Chasseurs d'Afrique, very brave, very clever in his profession, Cluseret had an honourable career open to him; but his irregular conduct had obliged him to leave the

French army. Since then he had lived at random. At one time we find him steward of M. Carayon-Latour's estates. He was in America at the beginning of the war of Italian Unity; there he recruited a legion of volunteers, and brought them over to Garibaldi, who first made him a colonel, then a general. Afterwards he returned to America and served in the Army of the North during the war of Secession, as colonel of the staff. Between the wars he became a newspaper-correspondent in New York, London, or Paris, never writing except in the most advanced Liberal papers. He soon entered the "Internationale." He joined even the Fenians during one of his visits to England. If it be true, as it is affirmed, that he took part in the expedition against Chester Castle, he was truly predestined to become a general under the Commune. After 4th April he accepted the post which was offered him, and perhaps had made up his mind to become dictator. At any rate, he intended to be absolute master in his department, and he would have been so indeed had a strong will joined to real capacity been sufficient for the purpose.

Two days after his appointment he addressed a Report to the Executive Commission, in which the following passage occurs:—

"The situation may be summed up thus: ex-

cellent soldiers, officers, some very good and others very bad. A great deal of dash (élan), little enough stability. When the war companies shall have been formed and freed from the stationary element, we shall have first-class troops, whose effective force will exceed 100,000. I cannot impress too strongly on the Guards that they should direct all their attention to the choice of their commanders.

"At present the relative positions of the two armies may be summed up thus: the Prussians of Versailles occupy the positions of their congeners from beyond the Rhine; we occupy the trenches, Les Moulineaux, and the railway station of Clamart.

"In fact, our position is that of men who, strong in the right, wait patiently to be attacked, content with defending themselves.

". . . . In conclusion, citizens, I think that if your troops keep cool and collected, and husband their ammunition, the enemy will get tired before we shall."

The remark upon the officers, "some very good, others very bad," the warning not to waste ammunition, and above all, the declaration that it was necessary to await patiently the enemy's attack and to keep on the defensive, are the words of a man who is not afraid to tell the

truth. He did not stint it in reference to the members of the Commune, whom he plainly called idiots.

The Commune, until April 11th, had before it the former army of Paris, re-enforced by the regiments from the other side of the Loire, and commanded by General Vinoy. It was only after April 11th that the real army of Versailles, so patiently organized by M. Thiers, and in which several of the regiments restored by Germany were comprised, took the field under the superior command of Marshal MacMahon, while General Vinoy, who had just been made Grand-Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, took the command of the reserve.

A more spirited and general effort was now to be made; hitherto, the chiefs of the Versailles army had been almost exclusively absorbed in the work of organization. Cluseret had taken advantage of the few days during which Vinoy's army was undergoing transformation, slackened the attack, to organize the resistance. The ramparts were repaired round about the Maillot gate, the gate itself was put into good condition, and the drawbridge restored. The gun-boats, completely armed, were moored near the viaduct on the road to Auteuil so as to protect the

southern forts. Iron-plated waggons, movable fortresses, laden with cannon and mitrailleuses, began to run on the railroads.

Cluseret had set four objects before him: to augment the effective strength of the National Guard; to separate the depôt of the National Guard from the marching battalions; to complete the armament and the administrative services, and thoroughly to reorganize the command.

He began by declaring that the military service should be optional for young men from seventeen to nineteen years old, and obligatory for all unmarried men from nineteen to forty years old. Two days after, on April 6th, he recalled this, and made service obligatory for every man from nineteen to forty years old, whether married or single. Paris trembled at this decision, which compelled the enemies of the Commune to fight on its behalf. He had also ruled that "whereas permanent armies had been abolished," all soldiers present in Paris were of right to be enrolled in the National Guard. As might have been expected, there was an immense number of defaulters. Cluseret demanded denunciation, and, charging the National Guard to hunt up the defaulters, said, "Discharge among yourselves the duties of a patriotic police." In consequence, he gave the

National Guard the right of searching private dwellings. Then in each arrondissement bureaux were established, armed with wide and formidable powers. Various penalties were enacted, more and more severe, as recruiting became more difficult; disarmament, the interdiction of civil rights; trial by Court-Martial. A municipal order, after Cluseret's time, referring to defaulters, said: "The penalty incurred is that of death." It was proposed that the pupils should be taken from the colleges, the seminarists and monks from the convents. The head-master of Saint Louis, Monsieur Joguet, did himself great honour by his courageous resistance. The Dominicans of Arcueil, who refused to bear arms and to work at the barricades, but offered to carry litters and serve with the ambulances, were cast into prison, and finally massacred.

To escape from being enrolled, many persons had recourse to flight, to disguise, to changes of residence; Cluseret decided that no one should be allowed to leave Paris for the future without a passport. Passports were fraudulently obtained, he ruled that no man from nineteen to forty years of age was to leave Paris at all, on any pretext. The trains were carefully watched; the arrests in the railway stations at the departures increased in in number. A few of the defaulters purchased

permission to get up on the engines, dressed like stokers, and begrimed with soot. Others bethought themselves of following a hearse with sorrowful looks as far as the exterior cemeteries; when they would throw a wreath of immortelles on the coffin, and gaily take the road to Versailles. Cluseret got wind of this manœuvre and thenceforth only women were permitted to attend funerals. Some young men were let down from the walls, and escaped from Paris as from a prison. A story is told of a poet who hired a vehicle from an old driver, changed clothes with him, put him inside the carriage, and drove the man all the way to Versailles. Changing one's abode was a dull device, because one only quitted the territory of one legion to enter that of another. Some took to wearing fancy uniforms, or, more simply, the regular uniform of the legions, but with no number on the képi. Cluseret gave orders that any National Guard who did not carry the number of his battalion on his képi was to be arrested, punished, and, if discovered to be a defaulter, treated accordingly. He required—but in this he failed—regularity and simplicity of uniform; the enthusiastic Federals thought of nothing but gold lace, sashes, plumes, trailing swords; they dressed themselves in the costume of the heroes of melodrama. Personally, he set a

good example, never wearing during his term of office any other than civil attire. He also tried to suppress the private corps, which afforded facilities for disguise. The public offices, and some of the great firms had armed their employés, thus forming independent corps; he incorporated these with the regular battalions. He was less fortunate with the innumerable bands of volunteers, "Enfants Perdus de Paris," "Bergeret's scouts," "the avengers of Flourens," "the Turcos of the Commune," &c., the Parisians persisting to the last in their mania for uniforms, their taste for independence, and their attachment to the heroes of the boulevard and the tavern. During the whole of the Commune there were corps in course of formation under the most various and sometimes the most extravagant denominations. In spite of all these obstacles, Cluseret displayed so much activity, that at the end of a few days he could place in line more than 60,000 determined men, without reckoning a considerable reserve.

He took special care to separate the depôt of the National Guard from the marching battalions; but this task at length was too much for him; men were willing enough to remain in the depôt on condition that they might keep their arms and ammunition. Cluseret, moreover, was

hampered by an ill-arranged commissariat, which was entrusted to inexperienced hands; by the perpetual intermeddling of the Commune and the municipal authorities, by innumerable officers, delegates, and commissaries, who often had no other mandate than their own, by a directing Committee of artillery, acting as an independent authority in its own sphere, and, above all, by the mischievous activity of the Central Committee, which had to resort to ruses to get its way in politics, but in military matters openly meddled with everything, and claimed the right to give its orders to the officers, and even to the minister. After a long struggle, Cluseret was obliged to strike a bargain, by which the Central Committee had the whole administration, on condition that he was no longer interfered with in the details of his command. The Central Committee had its bureau at the Ministry of War, and it appeared to be satisfied with this arrangement, which gave it a large share of importance; but nothing was beneath its notice, and never would it consent to be considered only an administrative machine.

The most important measure was the reorganization of the staff of officers. Cluseret, who, unlike most of his colleagues, had served in the army, did not believe in the efficacy of electing

them. He could not forget that the starting-point of the Insurrection of March 18th was precisely the assertion of the pretended right of the National Guard to elect its own officers, all its officers, including the General-in-chief. He had said in his first proclamation on April 4th, "In obeying your elected chiefs, you obey your own-selves." He accepted therefore elected officers, because he could not do otherwise; but he intended accepting them as little as possible. On the 6th April, the *Journal Officiel* published the two following documents, the second of which is especially very significant:—

"Whereas it is important that the marching battalions should have at their head officers who shall efficiently command them;

"And whereas in the recent events a certain number of officers have been found wanting;

"In virtue of the decree of April the 4th of the Delegate for War;

"The Central Committee resolves:

"That in every battalion a commander shall be nominated by the four war companies, and he shall lead them into action. The depôt companies shall remain under his control, and during his absence a captain unattached shall take his place.

"All commanders shall have to present them-

selves on Saturday the 8th at latest, at the offices of the Central Committee with their nomination papers.

"On and after Sunday, April the 9th, the service of the zones shall be done away with.

"By delegation:

"ARNOLD, GAUDIER, PRUDHOMME, BOURSIER, GROLARD.

"Seen and approved,

"The Delegate for War, CLUSERET."

Immediately after this edict, the same number of the *Journal Officiel* published a paragraph in these terms:—

"Whereas under existing circumstances, it is important, particularly in a military point of view, that superior officers of recognized ability should be at the head of the legions;

"In the arrondissements unprovided with such, the chief of the legion shall be provisionally appointed by the Delegate for War with the sanction of the Central Committee."

It was a rather timid beginning. Cluseret feels surer on the 26th April. He publishes a decisive edict:—

"War Office.

"The Minister &c. . . . Whereas the organization of the battalions of the National Guard necessitate a special aptitude in the staff of the legion,

"Appoints:

"The Staff of the legion, composed of—

"A Chief of the Staff,

"A Town Major,

"Two Staff-captains,

"And four Adjutants,

"Is nominated by the Delegate for War

"The Delegate for War,

"CLUSERET."

On the 27th it is the artillery's turn. An order of the day, signed by Cluseret, decides that "the nomination of officers shall be submitted by the Central Committee of Artillery to the approval of the Delegate for War." And the delegate adds by way of apology: "These measures are taken in view of the special aptitude required for the artillery service." In as far as the chiefs of legions are concerned, he dared not go beyond his edict of April 6th, which reserved to him the right of directly appointing to the legions that had no elected chief, but to those only. He even recognizes, on the 26th, speaking through Colonel Mayer, that "the chief of the legion, commanding in chief the active service, must be elected by the legion, in accordance with the principles of the federation." But he makes this declaration reluctantly, and adds immediately after: "This post requires sufficient military knowledge to

examine and appreciate the value of the chiefs of battalions, and an influence capable of getting the orders of the Delegate for War executed."

The chiefs of the legions were important persons, most of them members of the Commune, with whom he would have to reckon. The difficulty was still greater with the generals. The Commune had at first abolished the title of general, which did not prevent a great number of officers, and even certain chiefs of legions, from decorating themselves with it. Cluseret easily got rid of Lullier. That "general" had been arrested at the end of March in consequence of a violent altercation with the Central Committee. He had been kept in prison for two days; then, "his innocence having been recognized," he was set at liberty and enrolled as a private in one of the battalions of the faubourgs. The position of a private in the Guard not seeming to him to be suitable to his importance, one fine day he took for himself the title of Commander of the Flotilla. This command was not of long duration. Cluseret had the following note inserted in the *Journal Officiel* of April 18th:—

"It is absolutely false that Citizen Ch. Lullier has received any command whatsoever in the Flotilla.

"The Commune cannot give any command to the

man by whose fault, as he himself acknowledges, Mont Valérien is in the hands of the enemy."

Cluseret could not so easily get rid of Bergeret. Bergeret, who was proud of his services on the day of the 18th, proud of his title of General, proud of that of member of the Commune, and proud of the function of Delegate for War, which he discharged for fourteen days, would not hear of returning to the ranks, much less of serving under Cluseret, of whom he was jealous. The title of Commandant of the Place de Paris had been given to him as a sort of compensation. He would have liked to have directed the army his own way in this capacity. Cluseret decided that General Bergeret was to sign all orders relating to the movements of troops, "but only after having come to an understanding with the Delegate for War." This edict is of April 5th. It did not please Bergeret, who gained nothing by complaining. On the next day, Cluseret obtained from the Executive Commission, or rather, dictated to it, a decree in these terms:—

"Whereas the grade of General officer is incompatible with the democratic organization of the National Guard, and can only be temporary:

"Art. 1. The grade of general officer is abolished.

"Art. 2. Citizen Jaroslaus Dombrowski, com-

manding the twelfth legion, is appointed commandant of the Place de Paris, in the place of Citizen Bergeret, called to other duties."

Citizen Bergeret was finally arrested. He remained several days in prison, and was liberated on April 22nd.

Nevertheless Cluseret had laid his hand on several officers of a certain amount of merit, such as Jaroslaus Dombrowski, and La Cecilia. Wrobleski, an ex-forester, lieutenant-colonel in the insurrection of 1863, then an itinerant musician through France, commanded the second army for a little while. Greatly inferior to Dombrowski in every respect, he was hardly remarkable except for his bravery.

Cluseret, in the midst of the inextricable difficulties of the situation, had shown skill and energy. The prolongation of the struggle was due to him. He thought himself necessary, not without reason. He made no secret of it, and treated every one haughtily, even the members of the Executive Commission. When that Commission disappeared on the 20th April, and was replaced, with the same title, by the Council of Delegates, Cluseret, who meanwhile had already been elected a member of the Commune at the elections of the 16th April, by the 1st and 18th arrondissements, was confirmed in his post, and

thus became a member of the Government of the Commune, by virtue of the new organization. He was then at the apogee of his fortune. He had obtained, to keep his post of Delegate for War, forty-two votes out of fifty-one. Notwithstanding all this, he was arrested ten days later by order of the same Executive Commission, of which he formed a part. His crime was that he had not made the fort of Issy, against which the Versailles army had for a fortnight directed a formidable artillery, impregnable. He had done all that lay in his power to defend it. He met with the same fate as Raoul du Bisson, Lullier, Brunel, and Bergeret; the fate of Rossel, his successor. He was imprisoned like the others. A cry of treason was raised against him. The following decree appeared on the 1st May, at the head of the *Journal Officiel*:—

"The Executive Commission

"Orders:

"That Citizen Rossel be appointed, provisionally, to the duties of Delegate for War.

"JULES ANDRIEUX, PASCHAL GROUSSET, ED. VAILLANT, COURNET, JOURDE."

The decree does not bear Delescluze's signature.

These two paragraphs followed:—

"Citizen Cluseret is deprived of his function of Delegate for War. His arrest, ordered by the

Executive Commission, is approved of by the Commune."—"A substitute has been found provisionally for Citizen Cluseret; the Commune takes every precaution necessary for safety."

A note published the next day is rather more explicit.

"The carelessness and negligence of the Delegate for War having almost forfeited our possession of Fort Issy, the Executive Commission have thought it their duty to propose the arrest of Citizen Cluseret to the Commune, which has been decreed.

"The Commune, moreover, has taken every necessary means to retain Fort Issy in its power."

Rossel, whose tragic end has inspired a universal interest, on account of his youth and his talent as an officer in his branch of the service, was not perhaps superior to Cluseret as a general. His writings show that he might have been an author; he was, above all, a newspaper writer full of animation and originality. In the army he has left the reputation of being an intelligent and skilful officer. His private life is without a stain. During Cluseret's delegation, he had only been employed in a subordinate office. His principal duty at that time was to preside at a Court-martial. He discharged it with a severity which more than once amounted to cruelty. Commandant Giraud

of the 74th battalion (Charonne quarter), had refused to march to the Maillot Gate, because his men had not eaten any food for twenty hours; the Court-martial, to make an example, and to make the Court formidable from the first, condemned him to death. One of the affairs that made the most noise was that of the 105th battalion, which had mutinied in the Place Vendôme, and had refused to march against the enemy. It was a battalion which had formerly had Rossel's father for a chief, and had not re-elected him. It was thought that father and son both resented this. "Whereas," the edict said, "the general weakness of the elected chiefs, and the collective cowardice of the soldiers of the 105th battalion may be imputed to the whole of the battalion . . . the 105th shall be disbanded, and its number scratched off the rolls of the National Guard. The officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of this battalion, shall be incorporated as ordinary privates in the other battalions, and deprived of the right of voting in a civil or military election, under penalty of nullity of the election." There were, moreover, among the punishments to be inflicted, sentences of hard labour for life. The Commune itself was stirred at the news. A Commission of revision was appointed by it to examine into the affair over again. The decree was

reversed, and the accused were sent before the Court-martial of the 15th Legion. This decision, arrived at on the 25th April, is preceded by a preamble stigmatizing Rossel: "The Commission of Revision, considering . . . the Court was only composed of three regularly-appointed members, to whom were added two members arbitrarily chosen; the President of the said Court was chief of the staff of the Delegate for War, who was plaintiff in the case; in addition, delicacy as well as justice entailed on President Rossel, the duty of retiring, on account of his being the son of the former commandant of the 105th battalion . . . ." In spite of this adventure, President Rossel, five days after, became Delegate for War, owing to the support of Delescluze.

Rossel only directed the war for ten days, from April 30th to May 10th. In this short space of time he showed that he thoroughly understood his profession, and that he was hard-working and intrepid; he was neither less proud nor less haughty than Cluseret. Like him, and even more than he, he had to endure the cooperation of men who were incapable, and the domination of civilians.

His first act of authority was to modify the commands. Between Dombrowski and Wrobleski, the former commanding the right wing, the latter

the left wing of the army, he formed a command in the centre, which extended from the Seine to the left bank of the Bièvre, and entrusted it to La Cecilia. This was an excellent move, for it placed La Cecilia, who was a talented officer, in a prominent position. By the same decree he instituted two reserve brigades, under the orders of General Bergeret and General Eudes, a deplorable selection, which probably was forced upon him. It may be said, in his defence, that he was constantly hindered by the Commune and the Central Committee, which never ceased striving among themselves and against him. With the exception of a few former officers, lieutenants or captains, and the Poles, like the two Dombrowskis, Wrobleski, Okolowitz, and others, the officers he had around him were only civilians dressed in a uniform with a profusion of gold lace. The greater number of the chiefs of legions had never served except in the National Guard. Among them figured Boursier, a wine retailer; Lisbonne, first an actor, then a theatrical manager; Ranvier, a decorative artist; Millière, a barrister; and Jaclard, teacher of mathematics. The history of this Jaclard, if it were told, would alone show the disorder that reigned in the services and in the minds of the people. He had been the deputy of Monsieur Clémenceau, and had signed the first

declaration of the mayors. After that he went over to the insurgents, who made him chief of a legion; but he had a difficulty in being accepted in this new form. He had been appointed by the Central Committee, and his nomination had been confirmed by the Commune and the Delegate for War; it was purely and simply imposing a commander. His soldiers summoned him every day to withdraw, in order to make room for an elected chief. After a long resistance he ended by submitting, and resigned.

"I have ever repeated," said he, "that being invested with a command by order of the Commune and its Delegate for War, I was ready to withdraw upon an order to that effect, emanating from the same source.

"Meanwhile I have remained at my post, as it was my duty, and have maintained myself therein. It would have been a crime of high treason to have abandoned it upon the summons made to me by any other person than the Delegate of the Commune, and to have yielded to so mere an attempt at aggression as that which was made during the night of the 5th and 6th May, on the staff of the 17th Legion."

When Rossel had examinations for the posts of staff-officers held, he inserted in his decree the following sentence, which well expresses how

hard up he was: "Whereas," he says, "military knowledge and abilities are very seldom to be met with in the National Guard, the actual examination will refer principally to intellectual capabilities and the moral and political worth of the candidates." This was to be satisfied with a little. The chairman of the jury, to whom the task of selecting the examining body was given, was Arnold, a member of the Central Committee and of the Commune; a man of thirty years of age, an architect, who had never served in the army, and who, previous to September 4th, had been sub-inspector of works in Paris.

If the officers were incapable auxiliaries for Rossel, the members of the Central Committee were invading auxiliaries, who were tending to nothing less than to become masters.

The *Journal Officiel* of May 5th contained the following circular:—

"To the Generals, Colonels, and Chiefs of Service connected with the Delegation for War,

"I have the honour to inform you that, in concord with the Committee of Public Welfare (the Committee of Public Safety had taken the place of the Executive Commission), I have admitted in principle and I am going immediately to put into effect the complete co-operation of the Central Committee of the Federation of the National

Guard for all the services of administration, and for the greater part of the services of organization dependent on the Delegation for War.

"This separation of powers may bring about changes among the officials, of which I wish to give you notice.

"This agreement has been made for the following reasons:—

"The impossibility of raising the staff of officials necessary to the service in time to be of use;

"The propriety of absolutely separating the administrative department from the command;

"The necessity of employing in the most efficacious manner, not only the good will, but the high revolutionary authority of the Central Committee of the Federation.

"Greeting and fraternity."

It is evident from this document that Rossel puts himself forward as having made the separation between the services, while keeping a strong hold over them both. It was not the case. The separation had been forced upon him, and was complete. The *Journal Officiel* of the 6th contains the following decree of the Committee of Public Welfare, which interdicts most positively all interference of his in the administrative department.

"The Committee of Public Welfare decrees:

"Art. 1. The Delegation for War comprises two divisions:

"Military direction;

"Administration.

"Art. 2. Colonel Rossel is charged with the initiative and the direction of military operations.

"Art. 3. The Central Committee of the National Guard is charged with the various services of administration of the war, under the immediate control of the Communal Military Commission.

"The Committee of Public Safety,

"ARMAND, GÉRARDIN, FELIX PYAT, LÉO MEILLET, RANVIER."

This decree strangely limited Rossel's power. He was henceforth but half a minister. A few days after came a fresh degradation.

"Citizen Moreau, a member of the Central Committee, is appointed civil commissary of the Commune to the Delegate for War." Nor did the Commune stop there; it actually placed commissaries with all the generals, in order to act more and more in conformity with Revolutionary traditions and the practices of the Convention. Dereure, the shoemaker, was appointed to control the operations of Dombrowski. The Central Committee thus set up in possession

again, began to make direct appointments, without caring any more either for the delegate or for the Communal Military Commission. The Commune, feeling that if the Central Committee were to become all-powerful over the National Guard, its own power would be gone, and perhaps, afraid of a plot in which Rossel and Moreau should be the principals, published the following decree: the preamble shows that it knew it had to deal with a strong party :—

"The Commune of Paris,

"Whereas the co-operation of the Central Committee of the National Guard in the administration of the war, as established by the Committee of Public Welfare, is a necessary measure, useful to the common cause ;

"Whereas, moreover, it is important that its functions be clearly defined, and, for this purpose it is fitting that the War Commission be called to define its functions, in concert with the Delegate for War ;

"Decrees :

"Article 1. The War Commission, together with the Delegate for War, shall lay down rules for the relations of the Central Committee of the National Guard with the administration of the war."

In virtue of this decree, the War Commission

decided immediately that the Central Committee was no longer to appoint to any post; it was only left the right of proposing candidates to the War Commission. Moreover, the Central Committee was bound to give an account each day of the management of each branch of the service.

But finally, who retained the authority? Was it the Central Committee, the Commune, or Rossel? By whom were the appointments made? Everybody went his own way. Rossel being the most firm was the best obeyed, and even he was no longer able to rely on obedience, as may be seen by the numerous instances in which he dismissed his officers for having addressed themselves directly to the Central Committee, or to the Commission. The National Guard was composed of legions, commanded, some by the elected colonels, others by officers bestowed upon them by the Central Committee, a perfectly absurd organization. Rossel took a decided step. In each legion there were marching battalions and stationary battalions; he took marching battalions, formed them into regiments, and appointed their commanders. This radical measure did not pass without raising a storm. He explained that he preserved the legion as an administrative centre, but that he wished to create a radical unity. This

answer was indisputable. We may judge of the difference there was between the legions by two figures. Several legions did not attain the figure of 2000 men, the Popencoirt legion (11th) numbered 22,000. Rossel endeavoured to repair this inequality, by the creation of the regiments, and to diminish the authority of the elected commanders, being unable to destroy it. He wanted to limit the commanders to holding parades and making entries; but his reforms did not stop here. He was pitiless towards defaulters, and this was both iniquitous and imprudent. It was Rossel who devised the system of cards of identity. Every citizen was bound to exhibit his card of identity on being required to do so by a magistrate or an officer of the National Guard. These cards were distributed at a bureau in each quarter. Citizens who could not prove by the evidence of their cards that they belonged to the regular service of the National Guard, were immediately incorporated into the battalion of their quarter. The Commune hesitated at first to vote such a decree; and contented itself with prescribing measures for the discovery and punishment of defaulters. In the end the card of identity was exacted. The honour of having invented this novel kind of persecution belongs incontestably to Rossel. To show that the most ardent revo-

lutionists had no right to accuse him of weakness or of "moderatism," it will suffice to quote the following order of the day issued by him:—

"It is forbidden to cease firing during an engagement, even should the enemy raise their muskets or hoist a flag of truce.

"It is forbidden, under pain of death, to go on firing after the order to cease firing has been given, or to continue to advance after the order to halt has been given. Fugitives, and those who lag behind their comrades, will be sabred by the cavalry; if they are numerous, they will be fired upon by the artillery. The military chiefs have full authority to force other officers and soldiers under their command to march and obey during an engagement."

These declarations were by no means to be regarded as empty threats. The President of the Court-martial had proved that it was not in words only he was pitiless.

At the sitting of the 28th April, two days before the fall of Cluseret, Billioray said, "We do not want a dictatorship at the War Office. In that portion of the public service the Commune is mocked; its decisions are utterly disregarded. The war administration is the organization of disorganization." The phrase was harsh, but it was just; and it was as just under the rule of

Rossel as under that of Cluseret. The disorder was not to be imputed to only one or the other. It was everywhere; it grew out of the situation itself. The Commune had found no precision, no fixity in anything. At the end of six weeks it did not know why it was, nor what it was. Rossel was superintended by Moreau, the civil delegate to the War Office, by the Communal Military Commission, by the Commune itself, and by the Central Committee of the Federation. Under his orders were generals and colonels, members of the Commune. Eudes even was a member of the Committee of Public Welfare in the organization of the 8th May. The Communal Commission, the Committee of the Federation, the Central Committee of Artillery, the Majors, the Municipalities, the Committees and Sub-committees of arrondissements, disputed his authority step by step. The Government changed every day, and each government was more incapable, more interfering, and more odious than the preceding. The list of the commandants of Fort Issy will suffice to explain the military situation of the Commune. The fort was commanded first by Mégy, then by Larroque, Colonel of the staff. At the beginning of May the Commune sent Dombrowski thither; the Central Committee, on its side, sent Wrobleski. Rossel, who would not

submit to these encroachments, sent each of them off to his head-quarters, and placed Eudes in command of the fortress. This was an unwise proceeding, for Eudes no sooner understood the nature of his charge than he returned to Paris, leaving it to Collet, the chief of his staff. Rossel went several times in person to Issy. He even intended for a while to resume the offensive there, for which he required 12,000 men, who had been promised him. He waited for them in vain, and at length, on his pressing demand, 7000 were sent. This was not at all the same thing. Everything was going wrong, which was just what Rossel ought to have expected. It is strange that with his military knowledge he should have taken a hand in a game of this kind. Had he reckoned upon a general rising of the great towns? or upon the defection of the army? He had been at all events persuaded that his authority would not be impeded, or that his own energy would overcome resistance. He had always despised the Commune. His plan was to annul it, by means of the Central Committee, with the co-operation of two or three men of action, who failed him in the end. He isolated himself more and more during the last days, like a man whose part is played out, and who desires to fall with dignity. He did not even send in any more reports. At the sitting of the 8th May,

Miot complains that the Commune has not received any military report for three days. *Citizen Dereure:* "We have not had a report for eight days." *The Citizen President* (that day General Eudes): "Do you wish to send two members to the Committee of Public Welfare?" *Citizen Régère:* "What for? The Committee is like ourselves: it has received nothing."

The war news which Rossel could have given was not of a nature to bring much comfort to the Commune. The "Versaillais" were advancing each day; to Neuilly, to Auteuil: they rained fire on the ramparts. Fort Issy, which had been as good as lost to the insurrection since the end of April, and whose desperate position had occasioned the fall of Cluseret, prolonged its resistance for a few days, but no men of sense could any longer deceive themselves. Both sides were losing their men; it would have been better to make an end of it.

On the day on which Rossel took possession of the War Office, the officer commanding in the trenches addressed the following summons to the Commandant of Fort Issy:—

"In the name and by order of the Marshal, Commander-in-chief of the Army, we, Staff-Colonel Leperche, summon the Commandant of the insurgents, assembled at present in Fort Issy, to surrender himself and all the persons in the fort.

"A delay of one quarter of an hour is granted for replying to this summons.

"If the Commandant of the insurgent forces declares, in writing, in his own name and in the name of the entire garrison of Fort Issy, that he surrenders to the present summons, without any other condition than that of obtaining safety to life, and liberty, less the authorization to reside in Paris, that favour shall be granted.

"Unless he replies within above indicated time, all the garrison will be shot.

"Trenches before Fort Issy, April 30, 1871."

Colonel Rossel replied on the following day :—

"My dear Comrade,

"The next time that you permit yourself to send us so insolent a summons as your autograph letter of yesterday, I shall have your envoy shot, in conformity with the usages of war.

"Your devoted comrade,

"Rossel,

"Delegate of the Commune of Paris."

The Commune, delighted with this bit of brag, applauded Rossel's answer, and paid hardly any attention to the summons of Colonel Leperche, which clearly announced defeat. Some days were still required for the taking of the fort. The Château was taken by Faron's division on the night of the 1st May. The Clamart railway station was taken on the 5th. On the 9th the

38th regiment of the line entered the fort, which was evacuated, but still contained all its material.

On the 9th May, at noon, Rossel sent the following despatch:—

"The tricolour flag is floating on Fort Issy, which was abandoned last night by the garrison."

He had the despatch immediately posted everywhere. With what object? More could not have been done had it been a victory.

On that day Delescluze interrupted the sitting of the Commune with these words: "You are disputing while it has just been placarded that the tricolour flag is floating from Fort Issy. Citizens, we must consult without delay. I have seen Rossel this morning; he has sent in his resignation, and is quite resolved not to recall it.

"All his actions are hampered by the Central Committee. He is worn out. I have witnessed his despair."

Rossel wrote the following letter, which deserves to be preserved:—

"Paris, 9th May, 1871.

"CITIZEN MEMBER OF THE COMMUNE,

"Charged by you by a provisional title with the War delegation, I feel myself unable any longer to bear the responsibility of a command which everybody disowns and nobody obeys.

"When it was necessary to organize the artillery, the Central Committee of Artillery deliberated, and prescribed nothing. After two months of revolution, the entire service of our guns depends upon an insufficient number of volunteers.

"When I took office, desiring to advance the concentration of arms, the requisition of horses, and the pursuit of defaulters, I requested the Commune to increase the municipal officers in the arrondissements.

"The Commune deliberated, and came to no resolution.

"Afterwards, the Central Committee of the Federation came to offer me, almost imperiously, its co-operation in the administration of the war. Consulted by the Committee of Public Welfare, I accepted this co-operation in the most distinct manner, and I imparted all the information which I possessed on the subject of organization to the members of that Committee. From that time to the present the Central Committee has been deliberating, and has not yet acted. During this period the enemy directed against Fort Issy a number of adventurous attacks, so imprudent that if I had had the smallest disposable military force, I could have punished them.

"The garrison, ill-commanded, got frightened, and the officers deliberated, drove out of the fort

Captain Dumont, an energetic man who came to command them, and, still deliberating, evacuated their fort, after having talked nonsense about blowing it up, which was more impossible for them than to defend it.

"This was not enough. Yesterday, while each man was either working or under fire, the majors were deliberating upon the substitution of a new system of organization for that which I had adopted, in order to make up for the shortcomings of their authority, always fickle and ill-obeyed. Their secret council produced a project at the moment when we wanted men, and a declaration of principles when we wanted actions.

"My indignation recalled them to other ideas, and they promised me for to-day, as the extreme limit of their efforts, an organized force of 12,000 men, with whom I undertook to march on the enemy. The men were to be mustered at half-past eleven. It is one o'clock and they are not ready. Instead of 12,000 there are about 7000. This is not at all the same thing.

"Thus, the uselessness of the Artillery Committee prevented the organization of the Artillery; the uncertainties of the Central Committee of the Federation stopped the administration; the trifling fidgetiness of the majors paralyzed the mobilisation of the troops.

"I am not a man to recoil from repression, and yesterday, while the majors were deliberating, a firing-party was waiting for them in the court. But I do not choose to take the initiative, all alone, of serious measures; to endorse, all alone, the executions which would be necessary, if, out of this chaos, organization, victory, and obedience, are to be extracted. Again, if I were protected by the publicity of my actions, and of my powerlessness, I might continue to fill my present post. But the Commune has not courage enough to face publicity. Twice already I have given you the necessary information, and twice, in spite of me, you have persisted in having the Committee a secret one.

"My predecessor committed the fault of contending with this absurd situation.

"Enlightened by his example, knowing that the strength of a revolutionist consists only in the precision of his position, I have to choose between two courses of action; I must either crush the obstacle which hampers my action, or withdraw myself. I will not crush the obstacle, for the obstacle is you and your weakness; I will make no attempt against the public sovereignty.

"I withdraw myself, and I have the honour to demand a cell at Mazas.

"ROSSEL."

This long letter is a newspaper article, well written and a little declamatory. It contains one atrocious sentence: "A firing-party was waiting in the courtyard." To have done this was the act of a criminal; to boast of it, was not that of a politic man. He may have done it. It was he who had the defaulters of the 19th arrondissement placed in the ditches of Fort Vanvres while the bombardment *à outrance* was going on.

He desired to be, and was, arrested.

The Commune, formed into a secret committee, renewed its Committee of Public Welfare, in whose hands it placed itself to a certain extent, by deciding that it would meet only three times a week, and replaced Rossel by a civil delegate. This was Delescluze.

The Commune thus assumed the direction of the war. This was the last of the blunders which it had been making incessantly from the day of its installation.

What was this Commune, which, at the supreme hour, undertook the responsibility of the military operations in addition to so many others? What were its *raison-d'être* and its object?

Paris had its grievances, well-founded or not, against the Government and the Assembly; this was, perhaps, enough to explain a rising; but to found a government, an idea is needed. We shall

search in vain for that of the Commune, in its declarations and its history.

We see what it was that the Commune wanted to overturn; it was the Government and existing social order. We do not see what the Commune wanted to found.

When it was the interest of its members to make it out of small importance, they declared that the Commune was only a municipal assembly, that it demanded nothing but the franchises of Paris; and intended only to overthrow and replace the Government. In reality it made itself a government, complete, having its ministers, its finances, its army, and its flag. These are the terms in which it proscribed the national standard, which it had replaced by the red flag:—

"The citizens will cause the tricolour flag, which, after having been that of the Revolution, has become the tainted banner of the assassins of Versailles, to disappear with the least possible delay." Not only did the Commune want to be a state in a state; it wanted to be the capital, or, to speak more precisely, the sovereign of a federation of Communes. This is proved by the address of Paschal Grousset "to the great towns;" by the despatch of delegates, and even generals, to the provinces; by the proclamation of the Commune at Lyons, Marseilles, Creuzot, Toulouse. A federa-

tion of Communes! The United States and Switzerland are federations of states. The Commune did not know the meaning of a commune, or the meaning of a federation; it did not know in what national unity consists, nor what is the use of it. It made a revolution with one word and one hatred.

Hatred of the bourgeoisie. "The Revolution of the 18th March was made exclusively by the workmen," said Frankel. The Commune said the same, frankly, loudly, from the first day. "I am the advent of the proletariat." The advent to what? To equality? No; equality already existed. To domination? Undoubtedly, that is what calls itself equality, in socialistic speech. "The bourgeoisie have had their day; we replace them, as, in 1789, they replaced the nobility." Nobility is a privilege; it is overthrown and replaced. But what is the bourgeoisie? A bourgeois is simply a citizen who is educated, and who possesses. The bourgeoisie is not overthrown, one arrives at it. Or if, on the contrary, it be overthrown, the two parents of civilization, property, and the domestic hearth, are suppressed with it. The Commune would not have failed to do this; in all its actions, disdain of the family is evident. It had neither system nor principle; this it is which made it destroy without founding,

and attack, without strength or skill, incoherently and contradictorily. The few acts which it passed exhibit at once the existence of resentment and the absence of doctrine.

The Commercial Bills and House-rents Acts, which were merely occasional, if one will, nevertheless exhibit this double character. It is certainly socialism, and socialism in the condition of an expedient.

The Commercial Bills Act gives the debtors an extension of three years, from 15th July, 1871, and without interest during those three years. The House-rents Act makes a present of three terms to the tenants, even to those occupying furnished houses; it gives them the exclusive right to extend their leases for a period of six months, and prorogues the notices given by proprietors for three months.

The Commune was not satisfied with restoring gratuitously all the objects pledged at the Mont de Piété, for a sum not exceeding twenty francs (these amounted to more than 800,000 articles), it announced its intention of liquidating the Mont de Piété, and replacing it by a communal institution of "credit to labour," of which no one in the Assembly formed a precise idea. This is plain on reading the discussion.

The Commune intervened in private arrange-

ments. Proprietors could not give their tenants notice to leave while the siege lasted. It disposed of private interests; the workshops purchased by the masters were to be open, and to be managed by the former workmen formed into a syndicate. It laid down rules for the employment of time, night work was forbidden to bakers; and for the relations between workmen and masters, masters could not impose fines, nor keep back wages. On every occasion it was hostile to the masters; in contracts with the State or the Commune, co-operative associations would have the preference. It deprived all ministerial officials who had not assented to the Revolution of the 18th March of their posts, without compensation, and afterwards transformed the clerks and small employés into functionaries appointed by the Government.

A few days before the general rout, Grêlier published in the *Officiel* an intimation in three lines that the title-deeds of the Versaillais should be burned.

"The inhabitants of Paris are required to return to their domiciles within forty-eight hours; after which delay their title-deeds[1] will be burned.

"For the Central Committee,

"GRÊLIER."

[1] "*Titres de rente grand livre.*"

What imprudence! Jourde declared he would retire, if the action of Grêlier were not repudiated and punished. Several members shared his indignation. One only betrayed the secret of this farce. "No doubt it ought to be done; but it is imprudent to say so at present." After all this, Grêlier was not the first comer. Before the 26th March he had been the "Delegate of the Interior" of the Central Committee. It was well known in the Commune, that Grêlier had acted by order of the Committee; though this was not openly said, the Committee being the real master. A member ventured to say, "Grêlier must be punished, *and his accomplices.*" The phrase seemed imprudent, and was hushed up.

There were also decisions, and especially proposals, which touched family institutions.

It was resolved that concubines should be placed on the same footing as legitimate wives, with regard to the indemnity allotted to the wives of National Guards.

Citizen Vésinier made the following proposal at the sitting of the 17th May; there was not time to discuss it:—

"The Act of 8th May, 1861, is recalled; the Decree of 21st March, 1803, promulgated on the 31st of the same month, is put in force again." (This was the re-establishment of divorce.)

"All children, called natural, non-recognized, are recognized by the Commune, and legitimized.

"All male citizens eighteen years of age, and all female citizens sixteen years of age, who shall declare before the municipal magistrate that they desire to be united in the bonds of marriage, shall be so united, provided only that they shall also declare that they are not already married, nor related within the degrees which are in the eyes of the law an impediment to marriage.

"They are dispensed from all other legal formalities.

"Their children, if they have any, shall, on their simple declaration, be recognized as legitimate."

If this proposal had been put under discussion, no one can tell what might have happened. The skill of the great politicians among them consisted in putting aside discussions of this kind, in reserving them for that happy time when the Commune of Paris should dictate its laws to France in peace.

The socialism of the Commune was not much wiser than its politics, and its politics were about on a par with its military tactics. The name of the Commune had been taken out of the Revolution, as the red flag had been taken, and with this name, under that banner, it dared fortune.

The tragedy, which cost so much blood, and narrowly escaped destroying France, began, like a melodrama, with crackers and masquerades. A soldier is not made with a plume, nor a legislator with a sash. Never was there beheld such confusion, ignorance, uncertainty, presumption, and contradiction.

During the siege, after the capitulation, on the morrow of the 18th March, since the incoming of the Commune, the outcry against the Prussians had been incessant. But one Frankel, a non-nationalized Prussian, was a member of the Commune, and was even made one of its ministers. The Commune exempted Alsace-Lorrainers, and them only, from military service; it made advances to the Prussian generals, and its first utterance was a declaration that it would scrupulously observe the treaty with Prussia. Paschal Grousset, "Delegate to Exterior Relations," addressed a letter (which remained unanswered) to the Commandant-in-chief of the 3rd corps of the German army in the following terms :—

"General,

"The undersigned Member of the Commune of Paris, Delegate to External Relations, has the honour to submit the following observations to you.

"The city of Paris, bound by the same title as

all the parts of the French Republic, by the preliminaries of peace signed at Versailles, is in duty bound to know how that treaty is carried out.

"It is of the highest importance to Paris to know in particular whether the Government of Versailles has lodged in the hands of the German plenipotentiary a first instalment of 500,000,000 francs or any other sum, on account of the stipulated indemnity, and whether, as a result of this payment, the chiefs of the German army have fixed the date for the evacuation by their troops of the forts on the right bank, which forms an inseparable and integral part of the territory of Paris.

"The undersigned requests you, General, to communicate to him the information you possess on this subject."

It had been asserted during the siege of the city by the Prussians that a "torrential" sortie of the entire people would suffice to set Paris free. This was an infallible method, and it was resorted to against the French army on the memorable 3rd April. From the following day Cluseret stated that the war should henceforth be purely defensive; the people submitted, and preferred to remain merely besieged until the end.

The first "revendication" had been for the Communal franchise, and for the right attributed to itself by the National Guard of electing its own

chiefs. No more imposed mayors! no more non-elected officers! The Commune was hardly installed before it imposed generals upon the National Guard, and municipal officers upon the arrondissements.

It may safely be said that the Commune imposed itself upon Paris on the 28th of March. Notwithstanding the co-operation of the former mayors, the abstentions were 54 in 100, and on the 16th April, when the Commune had shown what it was made of, and found itself reduced to itself, the abstentions were 80 in 100. (Voters, 53,679; abstainers, 205,173.) It was decided, too late, that an eighth of the electors would no longer be necessary to render an election valid. The election was made by 1000 votes. "To confirm these elections," said Arthur Arnould, "is the dirtiest trick ever played on universal suffrage by a government. You are becoming ridiculous, odious."

One of the former grievances was the suppression of six newspapers by General Vinoy. The Central Committee allowed two to be suppressed on 18th March. The Commune suppressed four on 18th April, and on the 18th May, ten. If Vermorel is to be believed, Felix Pyat proposed these measures, which he afterwards censured in his own paper, a detail of but slight interest. The

liberty of the press, however, found defenders, even amongst the ranks of the insurgents. Whole battalions wrote to the Commune to protest.

Another grievance anterior to the 18th March was the arrest of Piazza and Brunel, and the condemnation of Blanqui and Flourens. The Insurrection, faithful to its former demands, abolished Courts Martial. "They owed that to their brothers of the army." They burned the guillotine in front of the statue of Voltaire. "The Committee of the 11th arrondissement has caused that servile weapon of tyrannic power to be seized, and has voted its final destruction." But the Commune imprisoned Lullier, Du Bisson, Bergeret, Brunel, Cluseret, and Rossel. Raoul Rigault was allowed to fill the prisons; he went with Ferré to pass his evenings at the Folies Dramatiques, and made his lists between the acts. To the mayors and their colleagues, to the members of sub-committees of the arrondissements, to officers, sub-officers, and delegates of companies, was given the power to arrest defaulters in the streets, and to search houses for them. The house-porters were bound to denounce such persons under pain of imprisonment. The Commune hesitated to vote the measure of tickets of identity which was demanded by Rossel, but it was

voted, nevertheless, after Rossel's fall. Every citizen from nineteen to forty years of age was obliged to produce his ticket of identity at any moment, and to any inquirer.

A mere National Guard, non-commsisioned (and everybody was a National Guard), might demand the production of your ticket, and if it were not forthcoming, take you to prison as "suspect."

To prison—everybody went there, and everybody sent there. All the generals of the Commune were incarcerated one after the other; Bergeret, imprisoned at Mazas, wrote on the walls of his cell, "Cluseret, I expect you here next week." The prediction was soon fulfilled. Chanzy, Langoriau, Turquet, tried Republicans, were arrested; patriots like Schœlcher, the very authors of the Revolution of the 18th March themselves; for instance, Assi.

A perpetual round of arrests and liberations went on. On a day when Dombrowski had distinguished himself in an engagement, in which he had the advantage of the Versaillais, he was arrested on the way to head-quarters by a drunken National Guard, and conducted to the guard-house, where he remained some hours. From March 18th to the 27th May there were 3632 committals, and this number included men only.

The Commune, which had abolished Courts Martial with much pomp, afterwards decided that there should be a Court Martial to each legion. Time was required to organize so many, and in the meantime a general Court Martial was established which could act at once. The Court made its own jurisprudence, its code of procedure, and its penal code. Rossel proposed that there should be but one penalty—death. The Court preferred to admit a little variety. The Commune itself sat in judgment upon offences of the press. It announced that it would try its own members. It conducted the proceedings against Bergeret, Assi, and Cluseret. Its defenders hold that it proved its moderation by the decree regarding hostages. The Commune had also abolished conscription and a standing army. On the other hand it compulsorily incorporated in the National Guard, all the soldiers then in Paris and every man from the age of nineteen to forty, married or unmarried. Soldiers who would not serve were imprisoned; there were numbers of them in all the prisons, 1333 in La Petite Roquette alone. Many of them were massacred. It was an invention of Rossel's to pen the refractory soldiers up in a place where they were under fire. A colonel declared, rather late, on 21st May, that "the penalty incurred by all defaulters is that of

death." Another, one Spinoy, decided that shops, stores, commercial establishments, and warehouses, held by the rebels or by their representatives, should be at once closed and placed under seal.

The Commune had announced a reduction of expenses. It was *par excellence* the Government of the people; the cheap Government; the Central Committee had touched nothing but its thirty sous. The Commune only allowed itself fifteen francs a day. No enrolment beyond 6000 francs. No more Generals-in-chief, and even no more Generals! Never, under any régime, however, were there so many generals, so great a waste of money and resources of all kinds, so extravagant a number of officers and functionaries.

Those who were neither officers, staff officers of the legion, officers of the free corps, nor commissariat officers, were at all events commissaries or delegates of something or other. A few days after all salaries had been reduced to 6000 francs, and the rank of general had been abolished, it was settled that a general of artillery should receive thirty-three francs a day; a badly-done sum. All these generals had aides-de camp and orderly officers, all of whom drew pay, were bedizened with gold lace and aiguillettes, and indulged not only in vain show but scandalous behaviour. The officers rode at full gallop, to

the great damage of folks' carriages, and they drove about with prostitutes. Rigault, for the sake of example, made occasional raids on the offenders. He clapped the women into Saint Lazare, and set the fine officers to trundle wheelbarrows in pea jackets. Adieu, gold lace! The next day the orgie recommenced. Nothing is so costly as disorder. In spite of the efforts of Jourde, a medical student of twenty-eight, who was, after Delescluze, almost the only man of ability among them, the expenditure was increased in one day to 1,800,000 francs. It amounted to 600,000 francs at least during the first month. After the Commune had spent the money which was found in the ministerial offices, and absorbed the funds of the Ministry of Finance, 4,000,000, the produce of the daily receipts from the customs, octroi, registries, &c., was insufficient, so 20,000,000 were borrowed from the bank, which could not refuse the loan; a tax of 2,000,000 was levied upon the railway companies, with this clause, "payable within twenty-four hours." The expenditure up to the 27th May reached a total of 47,000,000.

The bank in Paris was in great and permanent danger. It might be pillaged or burnt. It was, however, only fleeced, for which we have to be thankful. The Governor, M. Rouland, whose

presence was indispensable to the Minister of Finance, having been summoned by the Government to Versailles, maintained order in the branch banks, and even from Versailles was able to watch over the interests of the bank and contribute to its safety. The Under-governor, M. Plœuc, and the directors remained in Paris, and encountered the demands of the Commune with a skilful mingling of concession and inflexible firmness, when occasion required, which did them the greatest honour. M. Charles Beslay, who had been the first President of the Commune, and who was its senior member, was a valuable assistant. He was a generous, devoted, enthusiastic man. He had been carried away with the most absurd systems and theories both in politics and socialism, in succession, but he had never swerved from principles of the strictest integrity. His age (he was seventy-seven), his past (he had been for a long time a deputy), his well-established reputation as a Republican and Socialist, the courage of which he had given many proofs, and, perhaps above all, that proverbial integrity, gave him considerable weight among the strange companions whom his foolish notions had collected round him. They would not have followed him in politics, he knew it too well to try them; besides he had neither the great nor the bad qualities by which a man leads

men, but in matters of finance he was listened to and respected. He got himself installed at the bank in the capacity of Government Commissary. With Beslay as surety and a battalion of employés, well disciplined and armed, who were kept on the premises, the bank managed to pull through. It is tolerably certain that Jourde was no hindrance. He calculated upon obtaining millions when the Commune should require them, but his ideas on finance and credit were too sound for him to countenance depredation. There came a terrible moment for the bank, when the Commune and even Jourde himself maintained that the crown jewels were lodged there, and threatened to enforce their surrender. Had the siege been prolonged it is probable that this "revendication" would have been the beginning of the end, for once inside the place the enemy would have sacked it. Happily the bank escaped with a fright only, and all the money taken by the Commune passed over the counters.

The Commune, who laid hands on our great institutions in the interval before burning them, and called it "protection," appointed M. Accolas, a private tutor, Dean of Faculty of Law; M. Naquet, Dean of Faculty of Medicine; M. Ernest Mollé, Director of the Museum of Natural History. Neither M. Accolas nor M. Naquet entered upon

their new dignities. M. Jules Simon, in summoning the functionaries to Versailles, had excepted doctors of medicine, schoolmasters, and custodians of public repositories. The officials, and most of the Librarians, were at their posts in the Museums. The Commune replaced those who had left, and did not dismiss those who remained. It only imposed superiors upon them. M. Vincent in the first place and M. Elisée Reclus later were appointed to superintend the National Library, where the latter was joined subsequently by M. Guigard.

The churches were declared Communal property, and placed at the disposition of the municipal officers. There were some curious discussions on this subject in the Commune. One member could prove beyond all doubt that M. Haussmann had sold two churches, another affirmed that certain churches belonged "to associations called Fabriques." All the churches were overrun, many were pillaged, two or three only were destroyed.

General Appert gives the list of churches invaded during the month of April, with the dates of the occurrences. "St. Eustache, violently entered April 11th; Notre Dame de Lorette, pillaged, 13th; St. Vincent de Paul, St. Jean, St. François, 9th; St. Martin, 24th; St. Pierre, 10th; Notre Dame de Clignancourt, 12th;

St. Leu, 13th; St. Bernard, 13th; St. Roch, 15th; St. Honoré, St. Medard, St. Jacques-du-Hautpas, the Chapelle Bréa, 15th and 16th; Notre Dame de-la-Croix, 17th; St. Ambroise, 22nd; Notre Dame de Bercy, afterwards burnt between 28th and 30th April, St. Lambert, St. Christophe, St. Germain l'Auxerrois, St. Marguérite, St. Pierre de Montrouge.

On Good Friday a delegate with a squad of soldiers entered the Sacristy of Notre Dame, ordered the presses to be opened, packed up all the valuables, and proceeded to load a van with the spoil. A courageous beadle escaped unobserved during the operations, and informed the Commune of what was taking place. They were in a tolerant humour that day at the Hôtel de Ville, and besides, they did not approve of these encroachments, for after all, whence came this delegate? on what authority was he acting? Perhaps on that of the Central Committe! A better authorized delegate was despatched to the spot, who seized upon the half-laden van, opened the packages, and replaced the ornaments and jewels in the repositories of the Chapter. This was a triumph for the Commune, for good sense, and for the Sacristy. The grateful beadle presented the Commune with a "satisfecit," which provoked a laugh, by its style and its spelling, even in those days when men no longer laughed.

The fate of the churches varied according to the disposition of the municipal officers. In some districts they were converted into club-rooms, in which meetings were held. "They seemed made on purpose." And the orators mounted the pulpits, which were decorated with red flags. Some of the churches were made to serve a double purpose. The services were performed in the sanctuary, and club-meetings were held in the nave.

In the 20th arrondissement, Citizen Le Moussu carried the following resolution :—

"Seeing that the clergy are bandits, and that the churches are their haunts, in which they have morally assassinated the masses, by handing over France to the claws of the infamous Bonaparte, Favre, and Trochu; the civil delegate of the quarries near the ex-Prefecture of Police orders that the Church of St. Pierre de Montmartre shall be closed, and decrees the arrest of the priests and Ignorantins."

This decree and its style were not to the taste of the Commune, and the civil delegate of the quarries near the ex-Prefecture of Police had the mortification of finding himself repudiated. But as time went on wrath against the clergy grew apace. The Archbishop of Paris, his vicars, parish priests, almoners, Jesuits, Dominicans, and missionaries were thrown into prison. The Sisters of Charity, the nuns of Picpus were sent

to St. Lazare; the goods of the Communities were sequestrated. At the Beaujon Hospital the nursing sisters were replaced by "Citoyennes." At length public worship was interdicted everywhere; it had been suppressed in the prisons from the first; and, to inflame the anger of the people, which required no fuel, the most extraordinary nonsense was published concerning some skeletons a hundred years old, which had been found in a charnel house near the Church of St. Laurent. The chapel erected to the memory of General Bréa, who was assassinated in June, 1848, was condemned to demolition, by decree, and a similar fate was reserved for the Expiatory Chapel of Louis XVI.; but there was not time to put the decree into execution.

As may be supposed, all instruction was declared secular, and masters and mistresses belonging to the Religious Orders were dismissed. This operation was a long and difficult one. It was necessary to reiterate decrees, to repeat and aggravate the menaces which were directed against those teachers. Crucifixes were also proscribed, and such as were made of precious metal were taken to the mint to be converted into ingots. M. Thiers' house was pulled down. The first decree had not been executed, and complaints arose in the Commune, during its high and palmy days. "Let us end

this," said the malcontents. They ended it by the following decree:—

"The Committee of Public Welfare,

"Seeing that a notice has been issued by M. Thiers, styling himself Chief of the Executive of the French Republic;

"Seeing that this notice, printed at Versailles, has been posted on the walls of Paris by the orders of the said Thiers; that in this document he declares that he is not bombarding Paris whilst every day women and children fall victims to the fratricidal projectiles of Versailles; that by it treason is appealed to that he may get into the city, knowing the absolute impossibility of conquering the heroic population of Paris by force of arms;

"Decrees:

"1st. Thiers' goods shall be seized by the Administration of Public Property.

"2nd. Thiers' house situated in the Place Saint Georges, shall be pulled down.

"Citizens Fontaine and Andrieux are charged with the *immediate* execution of this order.

"The members of the Committee of Public Welfare:

"Ant. Arnaud, Eudes, F. Gambon, G. Ranvier.

"21. Floréal. Year 79."

(*Officiel* of the 11th May.)

The column in the Place Vendôme was pulled down.

"The Commune of Paris,

"Considering that the Imperial column in the Place Vendôme is a monument of barbarism, a symptom of brute force and of false glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international law, a perpetual insult offered to the conquered by the conquerors, a standing outrage upon fraternity, one of the three great principles of the French Republic;

"Decrees:

Single Article.—The Column in the Place Vendôme shall be pulled down.

"12th April."

The "Moderates" resorted to all kinds of shifts to prevent the execution of this sentence of death. First, they got it put off until the anniversary of the 5th May. The anniversary came and passed, the engineers were not ready, and there was a fresh adjournment. At length there was no more to be done. The column fell on the 16th May.

Arthur Arnould said, "You are falling into derision and odium." Avrial said, "You vote decrees, and you have no means of getting them executed. One passes on the responsibility to another, and nothing is done." Vallés said, "I

have been to your prison in the Rue Cherche-Midi; and it's a perpetual seesaw of arrests and discharges." Billioray said, "The War Administration is the organization of disorganization. It is an incapable dictatorship." Delescluze said, even in April, "Do you think that everybody here approves of what is going on?" On the 9th May he said, "We have got a Committee of Public Welfare. What does it do? It makes special appointments instead of specific acts. It has just appointed Citizen Moreau Civil Delegate for War. What then are the members of the War Commission doing? Are we nothing? I cannot admit that. Your Committee of Public Welfare is annihilated, crushed under the weight of the memories with which it is laden, and it cannot even do what might be done by a mere Executive Commission."

"I am filled with disgust," said Vermorel, "in the midst of such folly, pretension, and cowardice. The game is lost. The communal idea was a good one, but we had only fools, knaves, and traitors to carry it out; our instruments were either base or ridiculous. I have no hope, and no faith in anything I see or in any one who approaches me." We have heard what Rossel said. His practical knowledge and firmness of purpose were indisputable, and his charges are sweeping. On

the 14th May, a correspondence on the position of Paris appeared in the *Temps*. It contained the following :—

"At the present writing there no longer exists anything, or nearly so. The Commune holds no more meetings because it could only meet to arrest itself; Pyat would demand the head of Delescluze, who would demand the head of Colonel Brunel, who has deserted Fort Issy? The Central Committee would indict all whom the Commune should have overlooked. Delescluze and Pyat are playing at hide and seek. Delescluze wishes to reinstate Rossel, Pyat would like to hang him. The Committee is for Pyat, the Commune is for Delescluze; Rossel is in a safe hiding-place, out of which he will not come, for he is more afraid of those who want to make a dictator of him than of those who want to have him shot."

With a Government in such a state of disorder, a well-behaved population was hardly to be looked for. Every day fresh orders were issued that prostitutes were not to walk the streets, which only proves that street-walking was not discontinued. Rigault, who took fits of severity towards other people, passed his nights in orgies, at the ex-Prefecture, with "his Staff." Never had so many drunken men been seen. The pay of

one franc fifty centimes was spent on drink; and all kinds of measures had to be taken to secure a portion of that sum for the men's wives. The municipal officers gave orders that any National Guard who was found drunk, or in the company of prostitutes, should be taken to prison. This would have been no trifling task. Here is a letter from Cluseret to the generals under his orders, during his dictatorship.

"General,

"There is a general complaint, and especially from the Commune, of your over-sumptuous staff, and that they show themselves on the Boulevards with loose women, and in carriages, etc. I beg of you to make a clean sweep of all these people. You are compromised by them, and with you, I myself, and our principles."

Here again is a portrait of an officer of the National Guard drawn by Rossel with a master hand, also during the time of his power. "These rascally officers of the Commune, drinking at the public-house bar with the sergeants; beggars disguised as soldiers, and who turn the uniform into which they have been thrust into unsightly rags; with their trousers twisted, their swords between their legs, their belts loose, coats too big for them, their greasy képis on the top of their dirty selves, their eyes and their speech alike tipsy;

such were the fellows who pretended to free the country from the rule of the sword, and who could only institute the rule of delirium tremens." There was not too much honesty, dummies in the companies, and scandalous perquisites to make up for the small salaries were not the only kinds of theft in practice; there were also organized robberies. General Appert describes the pillage of Neuilly from the Report of the Government commissary:—

"On the 10th May the 257th battalion replaced the 117th. Till then there had been only isolated cases of pillage. From the 18th May the 257th exhibit no further scruples, and seem to fear nothing except discovery. There are still in the cantonments old men, women and children. These indiscreet witnesses must be got rid of at any cost. Revolver in hand they expel the remaining inhabitants, bully or threaten with death those who resist. They drive the people like sheep to head-quarters—stones are flung at them all the way—thence to despatch them to Paris. A dying woman does not even find grace with these men thirsting for spoil; she cannot walk, so they carry her on a mattress across the garden. Then follow orgies and plunder. All these houses are only separated by garden walls; the pillagers make their way from one to the other by breaking holes in them, and they get into the rooms by smashing doors and windows.

"Gowns of silk and velvet, shawls, laces, linen, curtains, clocks, pictures, curiosities, and objects of art, all that can be removed they pack up and send to Paris. The cellars still contain wine; they get drink, and then wind up these festivities by horrible balls to which the robbers dressed up in the spoils of their victims, invite their concubines, whom they summoned from Paris, and also their lawful wives."

The journals of the party contributed not a little by their bitterness and exaggeration to the troubles of the Government. Rigault and the others did not scruple to suppress some of them. They even ventured to suppress the *Commune*, Millière's paper, he being also suspected of "Moderantisme," A great number, however, still existed. *La Vérité*, edited by Portalis; *La Lutte à outrance*, which belonged to the School of Medicine club; the *Mot d'Ordre*, Rochefort's paper, which supported Rossel. (Rochefort got tired of it at last, fled in disguise, was taken and brought to Versailles, where he arrived on the 20th May.) *La Carmagnole*, by Touchatout; *Le Cri du Peuple*, Jules Vallés; *Le Père Duchesne*, Vermersch; *L'Ordre* and *L'Ami du Peuple*, published one after the other, but without success, by Vermozel. *La Sociale*, André Leo; *La Montagne*, *Le Saint Public*, G. Maroteau; *L'Action*, *Le Tribun du Peuple*, Lissagaray; *Paris Libre*, Vesinier; *Le Réveil du Peuple*, by Cournet

and Razoua; *Le Bonnet Rouge*, by Segondigné; etc., etc.

With all this, a city full of clubs and committees, who made speeches, assigned missions to themselves, and assumed a right of control over every one and every thing. The Central Republican Union, the Republican Union for the Rights of Paris; the Jacobin Club; the League of the Deliverance of Alsace-Lorraine; the St. Eustache club; the St. Sulpice club. (church clubs may be mentioned collectively; there was scarcely a church without its club.) The School of Medicine club: one of the most active and powerful both before and after the 18th March; the Republican Alliance of the Departments, a club formed of former citizens of the departments, now inhabitants of Paris. The Commission of Conciliation of commerce, of work and industry; the Central Committee of the Women's Union for the defence of Paris, and the succour of the wounded; the Federation of Freemasons of all rites; the Carbonarism of all countries; the Federation of Artists; and above all these associations and corporations, the International Association, which perseveringly pursued its socialistic aims without attracting any notice, and which had a hand in all political affairs; lastly, the Central Committee, its ally if not its instrument, and which originated the Revolution.

The "Conciliators" were very numerous in Paris, even in the clubs, where they did not always obtain a hearing. For many this was a mission, for some it was a profession. Those, both men and women, who did not frequent the clubs, but remained sorrowing in their own houses, were also for conciliation, because they were for peace. The Freemasons made a solemn manifestation at the Hôtel de Ville; they went in procession to the ramparts to plant their banners there, they sent delegates to Versailles, who saw a great many people, spoke with emotion of the evils of war, and the necessity for peace; but returned to Paris having obtained nothing.

The other associations, those even who like the "League of Paris" made continuous efforts during two months with great zeal and courage, had no better success. The departments also interfered; the towns, great and small, sent delegates to negotiate for peace, or, not attempting so high a line, to beg for it.

They lured each other in all good faith with those two words—Conciliation and Peace; all would have been glad to have peace. But there at Versailles was the regular Government, and the Assembly, the issue of universal suffrage; in Paris were rebels: at Versailles, the old social system of France, based upon the eternal principle of law in

Paris was the negation of all law and principle. The Government of Paris had but one means of making peace—to submit. Versailles, that is to say France, had also one, to promise indulgence to the erring, but only when they had laid down their arms, and to the exclusion of all the leaders and all the assassins.

What could the conciliators do in such a state of things? If they merely expressed a platonic desire they would be simply ridiculous, if they proposed to make concessions to the rebellion they would be almost criminal. The rôle of conciliators in earnest could have been possible only to the Mayors of Paris, and that during the first week of the Insurrection; now they must fight. As to talking of "Leagues of Peace," the sole chance of obtaining peace lay in supporting the Government.

The municipal councils of a great number of towns in the south resolved to form an assembly to consult on the means of conciliation. The assembly was to meet at Bordeaux, and deputations were already arriving there when the Government interfered. The municipal councils had overstepped their proper bounds, and were violating the law. It was in vain that the delegates assured them that they were acting as individuals, not as municipal councillors. If the laws

could be so easily set aside there would soon be no laws left. The form in which the assembly was convoked admitted of no subterfuge. Even had the delegates done no more than form an assembly chosen by the large towns, it was to be feared that this meeting might usurp a political authority, and might want to set the large towns against the rural districts, as was done daily in Paris. It must not be forgotten that we were in the midst of a civil war; that the Commune of Paris was in rebellion against the National Assembly; that several towns had after their example proclaimed the Commune, and attempted a struggle as impotent as it was criminal against the regular Government of the country; that it had been necessary in several localities to fire on the Insurgents; that certain municipalities had addressed the Government and the Assembly in a tone of menace; that, in terms which were calculated to weaken the distinction between the just and the unjust, they had proposed that the Assembly should treat on an equal footing with the Commune, thereby confounding lawful order with insurrection, the power created by the will of France, with the dictatorship which had imposed itself on Paris by crime, and was reigning there by terror.

An assembly solemnly convoked at Bordeaux meeting in the building which had been oc-

cupied six weeks previously by the National Assembly, and nominated exclusively by the large towns, would have confirmed the antagonism that the Commune sought to create between the towns and the country districts. How should such an assembly be prudent enough to limit itself to the part it affected to play? It would receive the adhesion of Socialists and Revolutionists; before long it would believe itself to have rights and superior authority; for Paris it would be an auxiliary, for "the rustics of Versailles" an enemy. Not only was the Government justified in interdicting the meeting, but when some time later M. Thiers pressed upon the Assembly the necessity of depriving the municipal councils of towns of the right to elect their mayors, it is evident this recollection was present with him. He had long been of opinion that the nomination of the mayors ought to be in the hands of the Government, and he was confirmed in his ideas on this point by witnessing the attitude of the large towns in the south, and hearing their language.

The congress, which had been unable to meet at Bordeaux, found a refuge at Lyons. But warned by their repulse, its members did not court notice, nor did they affect the formalities of a meeting of representatives; they adopted the language and bearing of the Union for the Rights

of Paris, with which they placed themselves in correspondence; and they sent delegates to Versailles, with a mission to M. Thiers. Afterwards, if necessary, they were to address themselves to the Commune of Paris.

M. Thiers received all who came; it was marvellous how he found time. He managed the army as much as did the General-in-chief; he never passed a day without personally visiting the outposts, he sat in council with his ministers daily for hours; difficulties with Berlin and the German generals were perpetually arising, which aggravated and embittered the civil war. The Assembly on its side wanted to know everything, meddled with everything, wished to govern, and was perpetually sending to him or requiring his presence. He spoke from the tribune, he spoke in the Committees, he wrote despatches with M. Jules Favre. In the midst of overwhelming work, and cares of every kind, he listened to the delegates with patience. It was not an easy matter to answer them. The delegates complained that he did not make concessions enough, and the Right that he made too many; he replied, however, and in unvarying terms, that, as to the Republic, it ran no risk in his hands, that he would not permit any party to attack it, that he should restore the trust such as he had accepted it at Bordeaux,

honestly and faithfully; that he had no political mental reservations, nor any other desire than to cure the ills of France. He promised for Paris all the liberty compatible with the security of the State. If the insurgents would lay down their arms, he undertook that only the ringleaders, and those who had been guilty of offences against the common law should be punished. He even consented to give the National Guard their pay, until the workshops should be reopened. Could he answer otherwise? The Right would have had him refuse all audiences, or if he granted them, speak only of his determination to quell the Insurrection. They reproached him especially for his careful handling of the Republican form, which almost amounted to an adhesion.

The negotiators, on the contrary, considered that he promised nothing, because he persisted in treating the chiefs of the Commune as rebels; in fact, almost all those who came to Versailles were, in reality, for Paris. The most reasonable put Versailles and Paris on the same level; they proposed the simultaneous abdication of the Assembly and the Commune, and the election of a new Assembly. This was to propose that law should be abandoned and revolt legalized. These attempts were made so often and under so many forms, that it was feared the good sense of the people would be

affected by them. The Commune on their side never for a moment thought of submitting; when they entertained the idea of a negotiation, it was on the footing of one power treating with another, and they did not even do that until the last moment, when the army was already in Paris. On the 3rd May Paschal Grousset exclaimed, "I demand of the Commune to have done with negotiators;" another said, "We are not belligerents, we are judges." A saying was current among the most violent, both in Paris and at Versailles, "Negotiation is treason." The women were associated with these efforts, but in different ways; some ardently desiring peace, looking at nothing else; begging it, so to speak, on their knees; others repelling the idea with scorn, and wanting, as they proclaimed incessantly among the combatants, "to conquer or to die."

The following proclamation was posted in Paris, on the 3rd May:—

"The women of Paris, in the name of Country, Honour, and even Humanity, demand an armistice.

"They think that the courageous resignation of which they have given proof, this winter, during the siege, has established for them a right to be heard by the opposing parties, and they hope that their titles of wives and mothers will soften hearts alike in Paris and at Versailles.

"Weary of suffering, terrified by the misfortunes, this time inglorious which again threaten them, they appeal to the generosity of Versailles, to the generosity of Paris.

"They implore these towns to lay down arms were it only for a day, two days, long enough for brothers to recognize and come to an agreement with each other, long enough to arrive at a peaceful solution. All the women, those who have little children whom the shells may reach even in their cradles, those whose husbands are fighting from sincere conviction, those whose husbands and sons earn their daily bread upon the ramparts, those who now are the sole guardians of their homes, all the calmest as well as the most enthusiastic, from their hearts cry to Versailles and Paris for Peace—Peace.

(Signed) "A group of 'Citoyennes.'"

This was the answer, which was not long delayed.

"Manifesto of the Central Committee of the 'Women's Union for the Defence of Paris and the Care of the wounded.'

"In the name of the social Revolution which we proclaim, in the name of the rights of labour, of equality and justice, the Union of Women for the Defence of Paris and the Care of the Wounded, protest with all their strength against the un-

worthy proclamation of the 'Citoyennes' posted the day before yesterday, and emanating from an anonymous group of reactionaries. The said proclamation sets forth that the women of Paris appeal to the generosity of Versailles, and demand peace at any price!

"The generosity of cowardly assassins! a conciliation between liberty and despotism, between the people and their persecutors!

"No, it is not Peace, but War *à outrance* that the working women of Paris call for!

"To-day a coalition would be treason! It would be to belie all the aspirations of labour which proclaims an absolute social renovation, the annihilation of all actually existing juridical and social relations, the suppression of all privileges, the substitution of the reign of labour for that of capital; in a word, the enfranchisement of the worker by himself.

"Six months of suffering and of treason during the siege, six weeks of superhuman struggle with a coalition of knaves and spoilers, rivers of blood shed in the cause of liberty, these are our titles to glory and vengeance.

"The present struggle can have no other issue than the triumph of the popular cause. Paris will not draw back, for she carries the banner of the future. The supreme hour has struck. Room for the workers, down with their oppressors!

"Deeds! earnestness! the tree of liberty flourishes, watered by the blood of its enemies.

"United and resolute, aggrandized and enlightened by the sufferings that a social crisis ever brings in its train, profoundly convinced that the Commune, representing the revolutionary and international principles of nations, bears within it the germ of the social revolution, the women of Paris will prove to France, and to the world, that they also, in the moment of supreme danger, on the ramparts of Paris, at the barricades, should the reaction force the gates, know how to give, like their brothers, their blood and their lives for the defence, and the triumph of the Commune, that is to say, of the People!

"In that day, victorious, free to unite and agree upon their mutual interests, working men and working women, forming one solidarity, shall annihilate for ever, by a last effort, every vestige of exploitation and those who practise it.

"Long live the social and universal Republic!

"Long live labour!

"Long live the Commune!

"The executive commission of the Central Committee, Le Mel, Jacquier, Lefevre, Leloup, Dmitrief.—Paris, 6th May."

The "citoyennes," Lemel, Jaquier, Lefevre, Leloup, and Dmitrief did not confine themselves to

proclamations in this high style; a few days later they turned out a battalion of 2500 women, commanded by men, well armed and equipped, who were reviewed on the 15th May in the court-yard of the Tuileries by two general officers, and a delegate of the Commune. They received, like the others, one franc fifty centimes as pay, and rations. Their exploits are not recorded, but there are instances of individuals, attached to the companies as canteen women, or who joined in the contest as soldiers in uniform, who displayed courage and eagerness scarcely equalled by the men, and ferocity which contributed not a little to render the civil war especially sanguinary.

Many were to be found at a later date behind the barricades. Others undertook the pouring of petroleum upon the houses. The unfortunate women who preached conciliation and prayed with tears for peace, had dangerous and terrible neighbours. The Commune expected something more from the large towns than sympathetic demonstration and efforts at conciliation. While at Versailles the meeting of the Congress of Bordeaux had been prevented, and measures were taken to dissolve the Congress of Lyons the moment it presented any aspect beyond that of a club; Paris was indignant at a timid intervention, which led only to speech-making and embassies.

Lyons, Marseilles and Toulouse had been unable to maintain their Communes after having proclaimed them. The Congress of the southern towns that was to have met at Bordeaux was still-born. The Commune of Paris allowed that in both cases they succumbed to force; but now, when by means of a little stratagem, by hiding the desired aim, and accepting all who offered themselves as delegates, a number of Federalists had been collected together, why should this assembly give itself airs of impartiality between the Commune and the Monarchy? Paschal Grousset was employed to bring these lukewarm friends to account. "What are you waiting for before you rise? Is it that the last soldier of the good cause may have been shot down by the poisoned bullets of Versailles!

"Are you waiting until Paris is transformed into a cemetery and every house into a tomb?

"Great cities! the time is at an end for manifestations; you have muskets and ammunition. To arms!"

"Do not forget, Lyons, Marseilles, Lille, Toulouse, Nantes, Bordeaux and others! Should Paris fall for the liberty of the world, avenging History would have the right to say that Paris was slain because you will have allowed the murder to be done."

But the great cities remained deaf to these

despairing appeals. The congress of Lyons had neither generals nor soldiers. It had done all in its power by sending commissaries to Paris and Versailles, and it continued to send them to the end: some were still at Versailles on the 20th May. There they met with the delegates of the Union of the Syndicates, who came from Paris to make one more attempt at conciliation. The ambassadors from the Lyons congress, and those from the Syndicates of Paris assembled in a body to demand an audience with the Chief of the Executive. It was then Saturday evening, and the end was close at hand. M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire put off these tardy diplomatists to Monday the 22nd; when that day came they learned that M. Thiers was in Paris.

The conciliators, its platonic friends, were only trouble to the Commune. The Central Committee of the National Guard was something more than a trouble, it was a danger. When the Members of Committee were ousted by the votes of the 26th March, they flattered themselves if they kept up their influence over the National Guard, the Commune would be simply a sham government, which they could direct or suppress at pleasure.

From the 4th April the Commune felt it necessary to inform the populace that the Central Committee was not the directing power; that, in fact, it

was at best but the great family council of the National Guard. That seemed to be nothing, but in fact it was everything; for every citizen was a part of the National Guard, and in Paris there was no other armed force. The Central Committee, more clear-sighted than the Commune, took a very correct view of the situation, and acted accordingly. On the 6th April, the Committee issued a proclamation, as though it were itself the Government:—

"To the People of Paris.

"To the National Guard.

"Citizens, make no mistake, this is the great struggle; it is between parisitism and labour, exploitation and production.

"Citizens of Paris, merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, thinkers, all you who work, and who seek in good faith the solution of social problems; the Central Committee adjures you to march in unison towards progress. Let the destinies of your country and its universal genius inspire you.

"The Committee is confident that the heroic Parisian population is about to immortalize itself, and to regenerate the world."

The members of the Central Committee hold debates like the Commune; they exhibit the same insignia, visit the battalions on the ramparts,

where they are received with acclamation, post up notices on white paper, menace the defaulters, send them before the courts-martial, continue the election of delegates of companies and of battalions. The decrees of the Commune are scarcely attended to, but every one takes orders from the Committee.

The Committee appoints one of its members civil delegate of war. It obliges Cluseret, and afterwards Rossel, to resign their posts in the administration in its favour. It installs itself and its bureaux in the ministry. Its members are the administration to all intents and purposes, and leave nothing to the general but the command of the troops. At length they give orders to General Wrobleski; they try to lay their hands on the paymastership of the National Guard and the general disbursements. They send their instructions to Jourde, who at once goes to the Commune, and declares he will not submit. But the Committee is the strongest, and it forces every one to capitulate, even the Commune, even the Committee of Public Welfare, formed especially to counterbalance the all-pervading power of the Central Committee. On the 18th May the Committee of Public Welfare had published the following threat, which served in the end to show its impotence :—

"The orders given by the Committee of Public Welfare have not been obeyed, because such and such signatures did not accompany them.

"The Committee cautions officers of all ranks, belonging to whatever corps, as also all citizens, that a refusal to carry out any order of theirs will entail the summoning of the culprit before the court-martial under a charge of high treason.

"Hôtel de Ville, 28 Floréal, Year '79.

"The Committee of Public Welfare,

"ARNAUD, BILLIORAY, EUDES, F. GAMBON, G. RANVIER."

The Central Committee, directly attacked, obliges the Commune to send delegates, or rather ambassadors to it on the next day. It signs a proclamation together with these delegates. "There is said to be a struggle between the Central Committee and the Commune. This is a falsehood emanating from the reactionaries."

New rules are made that very day for the election and functions of the delegates of companies, of battalions, and of legions. It is declared that the Central Committee is preparing the means of utilizing all the resources, all the moral and revolutionary forces of the federation. "All the clubs or groups of the federation are about to receive precise instructions, regulating their

proper functions, and establishing the necessary relations between them and the Central Committee.

The Commune never ceases making claims and submission. It collapsed on the 23rd May, and the Central Committee officially assumed authority. The secret of its strength is in one word; it was organized. The Commune was not.

Nothing can be more lamentable than the history of that unlucky assembly. It gave its name to the revolution, it assumed every responsibility, and it was constantly at the mercy of its own generals and of the Central Committee. It passed its time in looking for itself, in making and unmaking Governments. The electors that had elected it were convoked, in violation of every law, by the Central Committee, which derived its own power from the insurrection.

The election, which was nullified by its origin, was not even regular in its form. It was solemnly declared that ninety-two were elected, but only by admitting as elected five candidates who had not votes equal to an eighth of the number of inscribed members. The same thing happened in April; in consequence of death, resignations, and double elections, there were thirty-one members to be elected; twenty-one candidates only were declared eligible, and, of these, ten had not obtained the eighth exacted by

law. Rogeard and Briosne refused to accept, and a third, Menotti Garibaldi, never took his seat and never wrote.

One of the candidates who consented to take his seat had only obtained 1000 votes; in short, the fifth part only of the electors had taken part in the voting. This result did not appear in the *Officiel* until the 20th April. The resignations were very numerous, sixteen immediately after the 26th March; five from the 1st to the 6th April; three after the election of the 16th. Amongst the resignations were those of some who, like M. Ranc, would have accepted a Commune, but they would not accept that particular one.

This assembly, so called, never arrived at having a compact and homogeneous majority. It included socialists, non-socialist Jacobins, plagiarists of 1793, clubbists who did not even understand what was in question. It changed the form of government three times in six weeks, and the members of the government over six times. At first there was an executive commission of seven members, having under its orders nine delegates or ministers, and nine ministerial commissions; then the nine delegates themselves formed the government; then a Committee of Public Welfare was inaugurated, composed of five members, with the full powers of the Com-

mune, even that of dismissing delegates. To establish this dictatorship, a great battle in the interior of the Commune itself was necessary. The mere name was terrible; a first ballot, which only related to the name, gave twenty-six against twenty-six. The voting was postponed until next day, 1st May. Finally, the name of "Committee of Public Welfare," was adopted by thirty-four voters against twenty-eight, who voted for the title of Executive Committee. The whole decree commanded forty-five votes against twenty-three. Nine days later the resignation of the members was exacted, and their successors were appointed.

The dissension among the members of the Commune on this question of dictation was so great that the minority insisted on "votes motivés" and the publication in full of the debates; very serious resolutions for an assembly which had only consented to publish the reports of its sittings under pressure of public opinion. It was thought at one moment that the Commune was about to split into two assemblies, for the members of the minority had retired into their respective municipalities and refused to return to sit at the Hôtel de Ville.

The Central Committee rejoiced. The dissentients had prepared a declaration which was to be read at the sitting of 15th May.

The Majority, forewarned, defeated this project by staying at home, which rendered the sitting impossible.

The declaration was then published in the papers, as it became necessary, it was said, to enlighten public opinion.

"Declaration.

"By a special and summary vote, the Commune of Paris has abdicated its power, in favour of a dictatorship which will be entitled the 'Committee of Public Welfare.'

"The Majority of the Commune has declared itself irresponsible by this vote; and has abandoned to the Committee all the responsibilities of our situation.

"We, thinking otherwise, claim in the name of the suffrages we represent, the right to answer for our own acts to our electors, without sheltering ourselves behind a supreme dictation, which our mandate neither allows us to accept nor to recognize.

"We shall no longer, therefore, present ourselves at the Assembly, until the day when it shall constitute itself a Court of Justice for the judgment of one of its members.

"Devoted to our great Communal cause, for which so many of our citizens die daily, we retire to our, perhaps, too-long neglected arrondissements. Convinced besides that the question of the war at this

moment supersedes every other, the time we can spare from our Municipal functions shall be spent amongst our brethren of the National Guard, and we will take our part in the strife." This declaration was signed by twenty-one members, Ch. Beslay, Jourde, Theisz, Lefrancais, Eug. Gérardin, Vermorel, Clémence, Andrieux, Serrailler, Longuet Arthur Arnould, Clément Victor, Avrial, Ostyn, Frankel, Pindy, Arnould, Vallés, Tridon, Varlin, Courbet. This project of dislocation, the consequences of which would have been serious for the Commune was not carried out. Some members of the Minority returned, they received a torrent of abuse and gave blow for blow, all the rest followed them. A sort of reconciliation was then patched up.

But the diversity of designs and temperaments had broken out; there were in the Assembly Girondins and men of the Mountain; united action was impossible. On one side they were for some moderation, on the other they were impatient for the end, even were it necessary to repeat the expedients of the Place de la Révolution.

The more violent had already declared at different times, "We are not revolutionary enough!" It was even, as we have seen, to appease them that the "moderates" had voted the decree regarding the hostages.

"Pass the decree again," they said on the Mountain; "provided it is carried out. It has as yet only served the prisoners, it is time to think of the interests of the Revolution. Let them shoot ten hostages forthwith, five with all due parade on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, the other five at the outposts."

"And what has become too," they asked, "of the decree regarding the Column? The tactics of the 'moderates' are too transparent, they postpone everything that they may prevent everything. They put a stop to these reactionary manœuvres, when they inserted 'immediately' in the decree for the razing of M. Thiers' house, which was obeyed. The violent members of the Commune did not say, like Delescluze, 'we will die on the ramparts, or on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville,' but 'we will be buried beneath its ruins.'" Some days before the catastrophe this same party requisitioned petroleum.

It seems that men like Arthur Arnould, Ch. Beslay, Tridon, Vaillant Courbet, Theisz, Avrial, Jourde, Babick, and Vermorel, suffered deeply from falling into this furnace. Delescluze was embittered against all parties and all men. He had no repugnance to civil war, nor to dictatorship, but he was austere in his life, courageous, disinterested, intelligent. He did not share the anti-social passions of his confederates.

He accepted the direction of the war on the 9th May, he a journalist, who had never been anything but a journalist, and knew less than nothing of military matters. Did he think himself a general because twenty-eight years before he had joined the expedition of "Risquons-Tout"? Did he, like the fools who surrounded him, believe in improvised generals? Did he yield to his old hatred to "militarism"? It was said that he had bound himself to follow the counsels of Rossel, and that he consulted him secretly to the last; and this is possible, nay probable.

Rossel, who had petitioned for a cell at Mazas, obtained more, they ordered him before a Court-martial. He escaped with Ch. Gérardin, a member of the Commune, who had been made his gaoler, but he remained hidden in Paris, till the end of the siege—occupied even during the conflict at the barricades in quietly writing his memoirs.

It is believed that Delescluze was in the secret, and that they saw each other daily. Delescluze, even with Rossel at his back, was none the less an incompetent War Minister; Rossel was certainly a good officer, there is but one opinion on this point even in the army, but was he a good general? This is a different question. His ministry was remarkable rather for orders and remonstrances than for exploits. After all, with the disorder which pre-

vailed, and such an army, the greatest proof of mental capacity that a general could give was to resign. He did this, and gave the reason publicly. Assisted or not by him, Delescluze could no longer dream of victory, but only of a making a good end. Rossel in his posthumous papers describes him thus: "Delescluze, if he had not been enfeebled by age and ill-health, might have been the man of the Revolution. He marked his appointment to the Ministry of War by several useful measures, which might have restored order in the government of military matters; to technicalities he was an absolute stranger. It likewise does not appear that he was a good administrator. All things considered, he was a worn-out man. On the 7th March, he was recovering from a fortnight's illness; a long exile had ruined his health; he could hardly speak, or breathe; he was a living corpse. His acceptance of power was the sacrifice of the miserable remainder of his life; yet he accepted it from the majority of the Commune of which he did not form a part, but which he dominated by his former greatness; this was an impossible rôle, doomed beforehand, and in which he was not supported.

He fell behind a barricade, but he had already fallen under his task. His corpse was found, disfigured by a frightful wound in the neck,

caused by the falling of a beam from a neighbouring house. His enemies found words with which to insult him even in death."

Delescluze, who had been elected on the 9th May a member of the Committee of Public Welfare (the last of five), resigned, that he might devote himself entirely to the defence. He had succeeded Rossel, May 10th. He was the last delegate to the Ministry of War. It was during this final period of the siege that the house of M. Thiers was razed to the ground (May 10th); also that the measure relative to the cards of identity, adjourned the first time, was carried (May 14th), that the Column of the Place Vendôme was pulled down (May 16th), that the Commune decreed the putting into immediate execution of the decree regarding the hostages (May 17th), that the last independent journals were suppressed (May 11th and 18th).

The army of Versailles advanced slowly but surely; the Commune, driven to bay, redoubled its fury. Towards the middle of May, the news was spread through Paris that M. Thiers was bombarding the city. It had been counted a crime in the Prussians under the first siege to have bombarded Paris. M. Thiers himself had held up the King of Naples to the indignation of Europe, for bombarding his capital in revolt. For a

week it was the theme of all the speechifiers in the Commune and at the Clubs.

But M. Thiers was not bombarding Paris; he was bombarding the ramparts of Paris at the two points where he meant to make the assault, at Neuilly and at Auteuil; the surrounding districts were laid waste; such is the hard necessity of war.

Delescluze on his side bombarded Neuilly and Boulogne. "Colonel Henry will immediately set up a battery of thirty mortars of the heaviest calibre in the railway cutting, and on the flank of bastions 59, 60, 61, and 62. These mortars are intended to bombard Neuilly and Boulogne, and also the bridges of boats."

Neither M. Thiers nor M. Delescluze could make war without firing guns.

Against M. Thiers a still more odious accusation was brought; he was accused of setting fire to the cartridge-factory in the Avenue Rapp. At the top of the *Officiel* of May 18th was the following:—

"The Government of Versailles has soiled its hands with a new crime, the most horrible and most cowardly of all. Its agents have set fire to the cartridge-factory of the Avenue Rapp, and brought about a frightful explosion.

"The victims are estimated at over one

hundred, some women and a child at the breast have been blown to fragments.

"Four of the incendiaries are in the hands of the 'Sureté Générale.'

"The Committee of Public Welfare, Arnaud, Billioray, Eudes, Gambon, Ranvier."

There could not be "over a hundred victims," since the cartridge-factory only employed sixteen men and fourteen women, and M. Thiers could not have set fire to it, because the act would have been at once a crime and a blunder. Delescluze did not hesitate to repeat this lie.

"Yesterday you learnt the atrocity committed within our walls by our infamous enemies; and your patriotic hearts throbbed with indignation against the offenders. The number of the victims is far below what we at first feared; fifty wounded, for the most part slightly; this is all that the men of Versailles will have gained."

Delescluze was not sufficiently blinded by hate to believe that "the men of Versailles" had plotted the burning of a manufactory. He took hold of this calumny as of a weapon, and strove to the last to defame the Government which was destined to conquer him. M. Thiers did not burn the manufactories, he did not bombard Paris; but he took his measures to put an end, within the month, to the civil war. The majority

of the Assembly, more and more irritated and impatient, constrained him to this. The Prussians talked of taking Paris themselves, if the Government did not end the matter. Another more pressing motive was the situation of France, whose resources were exhausted, and whose activity was repressed by this prolonged and ruinous war.

How could the ransom be paid; how could the country revive, if industry and commerce were not restored? And how restore them except by peace; and how attain peace except by victory? M. Thiers, urged by the most pressing necessity, resolved to make the assault, and rained shot upon the two points where the breach was to be made.

This was not expected before the 24th. The obligation to assault, which was fatally incumbent upon M. Thiers, made him tremble. Not only would the assault be sanguinary in itself, but how were the soldiers to be kept within bounds after the victory, if they entered by the breach, that is to say at the price of the greatest peril and over the bodies of the Federals. Of all the difficulties the human will can attempt to overcome, perhaps the greatest is to excite the soldier to the point of fury that will make him rush to the assault, and to restore him to self-restraint when he has scaled

the wall. Before resolving to spill French blood for hours, and to create lasting resentment and vengeance between the army and the population, M. Thiers resolved to do all in his power to get one gate opened to him; and in the first place, to address the people in the language of common sense, moderation, and patriotism. He sent out on the 8th May the following proclamation, which he managed to circulate largely among the National Guard, and to which the Commune replied by pulling down his house in the Place St. Georges :—

"The Government of the French Republic to the Parisians.

"France, freely consulted by universal suffrage, has elected a government which is the only legal one; the only one that can command obedience if universal suffrage is not an empty word.

"This Government has given you the same rights as those enjoyed by Lyons, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Bordeaux; and, except by falsehood to the principles of equality, you cannot demand more rights than are possessed by the other cities of our country.

"In presence of this Government the Commune—that is to say the minority which oppresses you, and which presumes to hoist the infamous red flag—has the assurance to impose its

will upon France. By its works you will be able to judge of the régime to which it would destine you.

"It violates property, imprisons citizens to make hostages of them, turns your streets and your public places, where once was displayed the commerce of the world, into deserts; suspends labour in Paris, paralyzes it throughout France; arrests the prosperity which was about to revive, retards the evacuation of territory by the Germans, and exposes you to a fresh attack on their part, which they are prepared to execute without mercy, unless we come and suppress the insurrection ourselves.

"We have listened to all the deputations which have been sent to us, and not one has offered a condition that was not the abasement of the national sovereignty before the revolt, and the sacrifice of every liberty and every interest. We have repeated to these deputations that we will spare the lives of those who laid down their arms, and continue the subsidy to needy workmen.

"We have promised this, and we promise it again; but this insurrection must cease, for France must perish if it be prolonged.

"The Government that speaks to you would have desired that you should have freed your-

selves from the tyrants who have made sport of your liberties and your lives. Since you cannot do this, they must make it their own business, and it is for this that the Government has brought together under your walls an army which comes at the cost of its blood, not to conquer but to deliver you.

"Up to the present time the attack has been limited to the outworks; the moment has now come when to shorten your sufferings the walls must be attacked.

"Paris will not be bombarded, as the people of the Commune and the Committee of Public Welfare will not fail to say was intended. A bombardment menaces the safety of a whole town, renders it uninhabitable, and has no other aim than to intimidate the citizens and to compel them to a capitulation. The Government will fire no cannon, except to force one of your gates, and will make every effort to limit this war of which it is not the author to the point of attack.

"The Government is aware, had you not made it known, from many sources, that as soon as the soldiers have entered the walls, you will rally round the national flag, and assist our gallant army in the destruction of a sanguinary and cruel tyranny.

"It depends upon yourselves to avert the

disasters inseparable from an assault. You are a hundred times more numerous than the followers of the Commune. Join, then, and in a body open to us the gates which they have closed against law, against order, against your own prosperity and that of France.

"The gates once open the guns will be silenced; quiet, order, abundance, peace, will return within your walls; the Germans will evacuate your territory, and the traces of your misfortunes will rapidly disappear.

"But if you do not act, the Government will be obliged to take the surest and promptest measures for your deliverance. It owes this to you, but it owes it above all to France, because the evils that weigh on you weigh on her, the stoppage of business that ruins you extends to and equally ruins her, because she has the right to be saved, if you do not know how to save yourselves.

"Parisians, think seriously; in a very few days we shall be in Paris. France will have an end of civil war. She will, she ought, she can. She comes to deliver you, you can contribute to your own safety by rendering the assault needless, and by once more taking your place amongst your brethren."

While adjuring the Parisians to succour themselves, M. Thiers sent into Paris in disguise

soldiers who were to confer with their old comrades, and men of spirit who, at the risk of losing their lives, consented to negotiate with the insurrectionary generals. Some citizens who had remained in Paris, hating the Commune, and passionately desiring an end of this parricidal struggle, had succeeded in getting to Versailles by clearing the outposts; they spoke of officers of the National Guard who were disposed to open the gates, of citizens ready to fight the Federals within, while the army should approach the ramparts, and thus catch them between two fires. Some of these intermediaries were only intriguers; others, for the most part well-intentioned, but ill-informed, brought nothing but equivocal promises and impossible projects.

There were, however, in Paris, some courageous and resolute enemies of the Commune. Admiral Saisset had for some days had in readiness a little army of 20,000 men. He had disbanded it on the 25th March, on the eve of the Communal elections; but several of these good citizens had remained secretly affiliated to and in correspondence with their chiefs, who themselves corresponded with Versailles: we may name Colonel Charpentier, Colonels Domalain and De Beaufort, Commandants Bonne, Dequevauvilliers, Polard, Durouchoux, Dumay, Galimard, and Roulez.

M. Lepage, author of a history of the Commune of Paris, says, that M. Roulez made thirty-four expeditions from Paris to Versailles, between the 2nd April and the 19th May. M. Barthélemy de Saint-Hilaire, who made it his business to mislead schemers and foolish persons, thought the proposal of M. Roulez serious enough to make it desirable to put him in direct correspondence with M. Thiers. It concerned the delivering up of a gate. M. Thiers, trusting the individual, but not confident as to the enterprise, nevertheless took measures so as to arrive at the appointed time at the foot of the rampart. He went himself to the trenches, and spent the night there, wishing to share this great peril with the army, and to trust nothing to chance. But the Delegate of War had suspicions; the rotation of the battalions was altered. M. Thiers had to retire after several hours of waiting, giving some pretext to the detachment to avoid taking them into confidence. This attempt was repeated twice. One of the correspondents of M. Thiers, M. Lasnier, was arrested on entering his house in the Rue de Maubeuge. Two large chests, filled with tricoloured badges, were found there and seized. It appeared later that M. Charpentier was on the point of being arrested when the troops entered Paris.

The negotiations with the insurgent generals

were active enough, but very difficult; they could only be carried on through third parties; the terrible danger incurred by the generals prevented their writing, so that there were then no guarantees, and to this day there are no proofs.

Not a day passed that M. Thiers and M. Picard did not give an account to the Council of Ministers of the proposals which had been made to them. The generals, who felt they were lost, should have been satisfied with a safe-conduct to escape to America; they demanded instead, or caused to be demanded in their names, enormous sums. M. Lissagaray relates that Cluseret boasted one day to Delescluze of having refused a million, and that Delescluze turned his back on him. If the offer was made, it was not by an authorized agent of the Government. We shall mention one of these attempts because it had tragical results. M. Georges Vaysset was in communication with Dombrowski's secretary. The secretary, on the supposed authority of his chief, demanded several safe-conducts and a sum of 500,000 francs. M. Vaysset saw M. Barthélemy de Saint-Hilaire more than once, but he refused to give the money without some pledge for the veracity of the secretary and the fidelity of the general. A day was fixed with the secretary, and a place of meeting

assigned near St. Denis. M. Georges Vaysset went there with his friend M. Planat, formerly a deputy of the opposition at the Corps Législatif, who wished to take his share of exertion and peril. They found only agents of the Commune. M. Planat managed to escape. Georges Vaysset was taken to the depôt of the Prefecture, and shot three days later.

The Committee of Public Welfare summoned Dombrowski. Guilty or not, the rendezvous given by his secretary was undeniable. Other generals had been arrested for much less. M. Lissagaray, who was that day at the Hôtel de Ville, relates the interview thus in his "Huit Journées de Mai derrière les Barricades."

"Brought before the Committee, with crossed arms and a glance which included every one present, he exclaimed with fury,—

"'It seems I am accused of treachery.'

"No one replied. A member of the Commune, Dereure, broke the silence.

"'If Dombrowski is a traitor, then am I also a traitor. I answer for him as for myself.'"

They let Dombrowski depart. He seated himself at the officers' table and dined with them. After the repast he walked round the room and shook the hand of each one in silence. They all knew he was going to get himself killed."

The event of 21st May rendered all negotiations with the generals unnecessary. The battalion charged on that day with the keeping of the Porte de St. Cloud, deserted its post. Was this mutiny, or excess of confidence, or simply disorder? It is certain that the fire of our batteries rendered the ramparts uninhabitable. Whatever the cause, the battalion disappeared. A brave citizen, M. Ducatel, seeing that the gate was undefended, scaled the rampart, tied a white handkerchief to the end of his cane, and made the situation known to an officer named Trèves, who hastened to him on seeing his signal. Paris owes it to M. Ducatel that it was not taken by assault. France and the army owe to him a prompter solution of the crisis. The breach was still insufficient, and Marshal MacMahon asked three or four days to make it more practicable. Captain Trèves was the first to scale the fortified wall with Sergeant Coutant of the 91st foot, who had followed him. Captain Trèves reconnoitred the position, in advance of the movement of the first columns of the army. The 37th foot entered first, almost all Vergé's division followed. At half past-five, General Douai's troops had taken the Porte d'Auteuil, driving before them the Federal batallions that had gathered at this point.

At the same moment General Vinoy entered

Paris with Admiral Pothuau, Minister of Marine, and they were witnesses of this short but sharp engagement.

General Vinoy gave some orders and returned to Versailles, whence he brought the Faron and Bruat divisions, and with them re-entered Paris at two in the morning. The army had carried the barricade on the Quai de Grenelle during the evening, and established themselves on the heights of the Trocadero and the Arc de l'Étoile, where the insurgents had thrown up works, which they abandoned in the agitation of this surprise. They fled by the Avenue of the Champs Elysées. Some few tried to drag away the guns, but had to desert them. The guns were seized, and not a moment was lost before they were set in battery against the Federals.

During this time the columns of infantry, following the line of the viaduct, opened the south gates to General de Cissey. He entered by the Porte de Sèvres at the approach to Porte d'Issy, left bank, took possession of Grenelle and Vaugirard, and marched upon the École Militaire, where he arrived on the 22nd at dawn of day.

The greater part of Paris went to sleep on the night of the 21st without hearing the news of the entry of the troops. Those who heard refused to believe it. The battalions of Federals, scattered

by the army, had announced in the quarters to which they had retired, that the walls were cleared, but their tale was received with incredulity; it was believed to be a panic. Delescluze revised and forwarded to the Committee of Public Welfare the following note. It was communicated to the journals; he withdrew it wherever he could, but it appeared notwithstanding on the Monday morning in the *Cri du Peuple*.

"At the Observatory of the Arc de Triomphe the entry of the Versailles army is denied. Nothing resembling it is to be seen. Commandant Renard, of the Section, who has just left me, affirms that there has merely been a panic, that the Porte d'Auteuil has not been forced; that if any Versaillais have presented themselves, they have been repulsed. I have sent for eleven battalions of reinforcements, and as many staff-officers, who are not to leave them till they are marched to the posts they are intended to occupy."

The Delegate of War was not long in receiving news which put an end to his optimism. He at once gave orders for street-fighting and barricades. Paris was lost, but not yet taken. Greek fire, mines, bonfires, immense barricades with ditches in front, and scientifically constructed, sanguinary engagements between house

and house, this is what the army would have to contend with. It would take a full week. All the horrors of the cruellest sieges of which history has kept a record were compressed into that short space of time.

That night Delescluze wrote his last proclamation; it appeared on Monday morning in the *Journal Officiel*, and was placarded on all sides.

"To the People of Paris.

"To the National Guard.

"Enough of militarism! No more gold-laced Staff-officers.

"Room for the people, the bare-armed combatants!

"The hour of the Revolutionary War has struck. The people know nothing of scientific manœuvres, but when they have muskets in their hands and pavements under foot, they fear not the strategy of the monarchist army.

"To arms! citizens! To arms!

"It means, and you know it, to conquer or to fall into the pitiless hands of the reactionaries and the clericals of Versailles, of those wretches who have intentionally delivered up France to the Prussians, and who will make you pay the ransom of their treachery!

"If you would not have all the generous blood which has been poured like water for the last

six weeks wasted, if you would live with freedom and equality in France, if you would spare your children your own miseries and griefs, you will rise as one man, and, before your formidable resistance, the enemy, who flatter themselves that they will crush you once more beneath the yoke, shall have nothing but the shame of the useless crimes of the last two months.

"Citizens, your representatives will fight and die with you if needful, but in the name of this glorious France, the mother of all popular revolutions, the permanent centre of those ideas of justice and solidarity which ought to be, and will be, the laws of the world, march upon the enemy, and let your revolutionary energy show them that Paris may be sold, but neither conquered nor given up!

"The Commune counts upon you. Count upon the Commune!

"The Committee of Public Welfare.

"The Delegate of War,

"DELESCLUZE."

On that same day the Commune held its last sitting at the Hôtel de Ville. The few members present were disheartened.

Felix Pyat showed that defeat was inevitable, and spoke of treating with Versailles.

The matter was not taken up.

They distrusted one another. They feared Versailles, and they feared the people, who would have cried "Treason."

They saw death on all sides, and consulted the Committee of Public Welfare respecting the measures to be taken. Its members were powerless; they thought to make use of the hostages to save their own lives, and Billioray, in the name of his colleagues, had broached that notion at the Union of Syndicates on the preceding Thursday. The members of the Committee present at the sitting of the 22nd did not associate themselves with the insinuations of Felix Pyat. They let themselves be charged with all the authority and all the responsibility, without pronouncing a word.

No one proposed any collective plan. The few energetic men present comprehended that the Assembly could do nothing more, either for the cause or for their own good. They dispersed, some to avenge themselves, or to go and fight, others to hide or to fly.

Delescluze, resolved still to struggle, because he was resolved to die, established himself at the Mairie of the 11th arrondissement, which he made his head-quarters. The Hôtel de Ville had no sooner been evacuated by the Commune, than the Committee installed itself there. More than

one member of the Committee, as well as of the Commune, knew that in a couple of days the Hôtel de Ville of Paris would be nothing but a ruin; but so long as it stood erect it was the official and historical seat of the revolutionary Government, and the Committee was anxious to date its proclamation from the Hôtel de Ville, to show that it had resumed possession of power, and sheltered itself no longer behind those two impostures, the Commune and the Committee of Public Welfare.

"Let Paris bristle with barricades, and from behind those improvised ramparts send forth her war-cry to the enemy, a cry of defiance, a cry of pride, but likewise a cry of victory; for Paris with her barricades is impregnable." High sounding words which ill concealed a great and profound disaster! The Central Committee had not, any more than the Commune, a settled plan of defence.

Neither was capable of anything more now than proclamations and incendiarism. While the Committee declared Paris impregnable, the army was pursuing a happily-conceived plan for crushing the insurrection while sacrificing as few lives as possible. The troops advanced along the two banks, strengthening themselves in the positions they took, and laying hands on all the fire-arms they found in the houses. Thus was

effected the disarming of the National Guard, which had been deemed impossible. They took over 350,000 muskets. On the Monday evening the army occupied Batignolles, the Saint Lazare Station, and the Palais d'Industrie on the right; on the left the Corps-Législatif, the Western Railway Station, the Invalides, and Vaugirard.

The Committee of Public Welfare addressed a proclamation to the soldiers on the 23rd. But how far were they now from the 18th of March!

"Soldiers of the army of Versailles.

"The people of Paris will never believe that you could direct your arms against them; when you are breast to breast, your hands will recoil from an act which would be fratricide. Like ourselves you belong to the proletariat; like us you are interested in depriving these conspiring monarchists of the right to drink your blood, as they live by your sweat.

"What you did on the 18th of March you will do again, and the people will be spared the pain of fighting with men whom they look upon as brothers, and whom they would gladly see sitting with them at the civic banquet of liberty and equality.

"Come to us, brothers! come to us! our arms are open to you!

"The Committee of Public Welfare."

The Committee also published the following decree at the same time:—

"Art. 1. The blinds and shutters of all windows are to be left open.

"Art. 2. Any house from which a shot is fired, or any act of aggression against the National Guard committed, will be immediately burnt.

"Art. 3. The National Guard is charged with the strict execution of this order."

On the Tuesday morning, the Republican Union for the rights of Paris, sent one of its members, M. Bonvalet, to the Hôtel de Ville, to inquire of the Commune whether they would not take measures to put an end to the struggle which for three days had drenched Paris in blood. He was received by the Central Committee, which since the day before had replaced the Commune. The majority met the proposal coldly. That evening, however, three delegates, Rousseau, Grollard, and Grêlier, held a conference with the Republican Union.

They would not negotiate, they said, unless the Assembly began by changing the Government. Thus, at this period of the struggle they were still making conditions, and such conditions! This was like insanity. The members of the Union replied that nothing could be attempted. Rousseau said, "We cannot be conquered. If need be we shall resort to extreme measures."

Already on the 16th May, the *Cri du Peuple* Vallés' journal, had published these threatening words :—

"A few days since, we received information of the most serious nature, the truth of which has now been confirmed.

"All measures have been taken, so that no hostile soldiers shall enter Paris.

"The forts may be taken, one after the other, the ramparts may fall : no enemy's soldier shall enter Paris.

"If M. Theirs understands chemistry, he will understand us.

"Let the army of Versailles be assured that Paris will do everything but surrender."

The same paper published what follows on the 20th of May :—

"Paris, heroic and despairing, may be blown up, but should this occur, it will be in order to engulf Versailles and its army."

Rousseau talked of extreme measures ; the Committee of Public Welfare, of burning the houses. Vallés threatened to blow up Paris. The Scientific Commission were incessantly requisitioning petroleum. The following paper was found on the body of an insurgent, killed on the 8th May, at the attack on the Mairie of the 11th arrondissement.

"Committee of Public Welfare.

"The Municipal officers are ordered immediately to collect all inflammable and explosive chemicals to be found in their arrondissement, and to concentrate them within the 11th.

"Committee of Public Welfare.

"C. Jauffret.

"The houses attacked by the Versaillais or by the reaction are to be burned. C. J."

It has been said on behalf of the Commune that no collective responsibility could exist on this subject; that there was no discussion. Doubtless we find no trace of discussion anywhere; but the Commune never met after the 22nd, the members had retired into the Mairies, remaining in the power of the insurrection. A few were seen to enter the Mairie of the 11th, where they sought news. The Central Committee sat at the Hôtel de Ville on the 23rd; afterwards at their old locality in the Rue Basfroy. Details are wanting as to what was said and done at these latter confabulations.

It is to be hoped for the honour of humanity that no discussion was held anywhere upon the assassination of the hostages; and the burning of the monuments of Paris.

In the Commune, in the Central Committee, there were men who would have protested with

all their strength, who would have made public their protests and their indignation: Beslay, who saved the Bank; Theisz, who saved the Post Office; Grélier, who prevented several conflagrations; Varlin, who risked his life to rescue the victims of the Rue Haxo; Vallés, Vermorel, who opposed Genton and Mégy, to save the hostages of La Roquette; poor Arthur Arnould, so little fitted for such surroundings as assassins and incendiaries, and many others who refused to be accomplices in such crimes. A resolution was indeed taken, that is evident, but amongst a small number of villains. M. Maxime du Camp, who states that he has quoted no text without having the original at hand ("Les Prisons de Paris sous la Commune") has published the following document:—

"Paris (22nd May).

"The Citizen Millière will take 150 men with fuses, and set fire to the suspected houses and the monuments on the right bank.

"The Citizen Dereure, with 100 of the same, is entrusted with the 1st and 2nd arrondissements. The Citizen Vésinier is specially charged with the Boulevards from the Madeleine to the Bastille. These Citizens are to make arrangements with the commandants of barricades so as to ensure the execution of these orders."

There is proof against some of them. Ferré's note, "Faites flamber Finances," is in existence; and so is Parent's order—(not Ulysse Parent, but a confederate officer of that name) "Fire the quarter of the Bourse. Do not be afraid;" and that note of Ulric's, "I am about to fire the Government storehouses." The story of the burning of the Tuileries is told by M. V. Thomas, nephew of Clément Thomas. The incendiaries were Benot and Bergeret. M. Maxime du Camp quotes the names of the incendiaries of the Hôtel de Ville. "Ranvier, Hippolyte, Parent, Pindy, and Dudach, undertook the execution of this senseless crime, and acquitted themselves conscientiously of it, aided by the federals of the 174th battalion and two companies of the Avengers of Flourens." On the morning of the 26th the federals of the 174th passed along the Quai St. Berrard, and said joyfully, "We have just fired the Hôtel Haussmann, and we are going to the Buttes-aux-Cailles to pitch into the Versaillais."

At night, on the 23rd—24th, a part of Paris was in flames. The Ministère des Finances was entirely burnt. ("Faites flamber Finances.") The Palais Royal and the Library of the Louvre, opposite each other, were set on fire. The Library had been sprinkled with petroleum. Previous to 4th September it had been the Emperor's library. It

contained a quantity of valuable editions, of magnificent bindings, of beautiful engravings. M. Jules Simon had made it the Library of the Museum of the Louvre, and had occupied himself with collecting publications interesting to artists. All was burnt, to the last sheet of paper. The Museums were in danger for fully half a day, but the wind was not in that quarter, the flames went up straight; it was a great piece of luck in the midst of cruel disaster. Several houses in the Rue Royale had also been set on fire.

M. V. Thomas thus relates the burning of the Tuileries. "Bergeret gave Benot orders to make preparations for the conflagration, and to set fire to the Palace. . . . It was no sooner mentioned, than he exclaimed, 'I undertake it.' He at once furnished himself with candles, brooms, and all needful utensils for spreading petroleum upon the walls, and powder on the staircases, and in the rooms.

"A barrel of powder was placed on the ground floor of the clock-tower, and large quantities of ammunition in the Salle des Maréchaux.

"He saturated the flooring and walls of all the rooms with petroleum; and laid a train of gunpowder reaching from the inner court to the ground floor of the Pavillion.

"Between ten and eleven o'clock Benot returned

to the Louvre, where the pair supped. After coffee, towards midnight, Benot proposed that they should enjoy the sight from the terrace of the Louvre. About two in the morning a formidable explosion took place. All the federals garrisoning the posts were alarmed. Bergeret reassured them, "It is nothing," said he; "the Tuileries are being blown up."

M. V. Thomas adds, that after the explosion of the Tuileries, Bergeret wrote the following words in pencil, and sent them to the Committee of Public Welfare: "The last vestiges of royalty have just disappeared. . I desire that the same shall be done with all the monuments in Paris."

Did he do this? Did he write this? Is it true? Is it possible? On the 24th, the fires continued and were multiplied. On the left bank, the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur, and the Palais du Quai d'Orsay, were burned. Several houses in the Rue du Bac were destroyed, and also the houses in the Rue de Lille and a part of the Croix Rouge.

On the right bank, a portion of the Rue de Rivoli, the Prefecture of Police, the Palais de Justice, the Hôtel de Ville, the theatre of the Porte St. Martin, were burnt, and also several houses in the Rue de Bondy, Place du Château d'Eau, and the Boulevard Voltaire. The Palais-

Royal, which had been set on fire, was saved, as also the Théâtre-Français by the arrival of the troops. The powder-magazine in the waste ground of the Luxembourg was blown up, so as to leave no ammunition for the "Versaillais." On the 25th, when the insurgents were dislodged from the Buttes-aux-Cailles, by General Cissey, they set fire to the Gobelins in retiring; and thus consumed tapestries which had no equal in the world. On the 26th, the Lyons Railway Station, and the Docks of La Villette containing merchandise to the value of 200,000 francs were burned.

The artists had formed a battalion, under the orders of Commandant Monplat; they had a twofold right as artists and as citizens to oppose these devastations. The Commandant stationed pickets at the Conservatoire des Art et Métiers, at the Archives, at the National Printing-Office, at the Mairie of the 3rd arrondissement, at the Temple, and at Notre Dame. The preservation of those monuments is due to these brave citizens. The incendiaries presented themselves and were repulsed. They had forced their way into the Mairie of the 3rd arrondissement, and at once forming themselves into a court-martial had tried the artists who opposed their entrance, and sentenced them to death. While the judges were consulting, the

condemned appropriated the arms which were stacked in the place, and had little trouble in showing the court-martial the door.

Assassination had begun on the 23rd, at the same time as incendiarism. On the 22nd, Raoul Rigault had gone to the Conciergerie to make sure of the presence of thirty-four gendarmes whom he had confined there. He said on leaving, "It shall be to-morrow." The next day, the 23rd, came an order from him, that they were to be taken away, and shot. A gaoler, named Durlin, saved them at the risk of his life. The old employés of the prison service, kept in Paris by order of M. Ernest Picard, showed praiseworthy fidelity in all cases. In the evening, on the same day, at the hour when the flames began to rise, Raoul Rigault repaired to Ste. Pélagie, and sent for Chaudey to the prison lodge.

Chaudey, who had received a visit from his wife during the day, was writing in his cell. The firing of cannon could be heard drawing nearer, he began to believe in his deliverance. He came just as he was, in dressing-gown and slippers. Rigault curtly informed him that he was to die.

"I have a wife and child," said Chaudey. "No snivelling!" Chaudey was not weeping. "You shall see," said he, "how a Republican dies." He awaited his death, standing upright without

trembling, without turning his head. The assassin also ordered three gendarmes, who had been prisoners since the 18th March, to be shot. Then, his business over, he retired, thinking perhaps that he had another victim for the morrow awaiting him at La Roquette. But on the morrow it was his own turn to die.

On the 22nd May, Ferré, delegate of Police, the successor and disciple of Rigault, had sent an order to the Governor of La Santé, which remained without effect, thanks to the resoluteness of the officials.

"Paris, May 22nd, 1871.

"The Governor of La Santé is ordered to have the gendarmes, sergeants, secret agents, all Bonapartists who are in this prison, shot, should the insurgents of Versailles have the audacity to attack and attempt to take it."

On the 24th, at eight in the morning he caused M. Georges Vaysset, who was detained at the Conciergerie, to be shot. The body of this brave citizen, who had served as a medium of communication between the government and the generals who were disposed to surrender, was thrown into the river.

The hostages of most importance were at La Grande Roquette. Raoul Rigault had gone himself to fetch them from Mazas on the 22nd, and had transferred them thither. In the prison were

the Archbishop of Paris, the Abbé Deguerry, curé of the Madeleine, some other priests, Jesuits, missionaries, almoners, and several lay persons. M. Bonjean, presiding judge of the Cour de Cassation, who had been a senator under the Empire, M. Chevriaux, now inspector of the Academy of Paris, &c. Efforts had been made some time previously to liberate the archbishop; or it would be more correct to say that efforts had been made to liberate Blanqui, a prisoner of the Government, by exchanging him for the archbishop, a prisoner of the Insurrection. The following letter, written by the archbishop to M. Thiers, and taken to Versailles by a hostage, who had given his word to return to Mazas, but did not feel bound to keep it, explains the situation with great exactness.

"April 12th, 1871, Prison at Mazas.

"Monsieur le President.

"I have the honour of submitting to you a communication which I received yesterday evening, and I beg you to take such action upon it as your wisdom and humanity may deem fitting.

"An influential man, closely connected with M. Blanqui by certain political opinions, and above all by sentiments of deep and long-standing friendship (the archbishop here alluded to M. Flotte, formerly deputy of the Seine) is making active

efforts to procure his liberation. With this view he has of his own accord proposed the following arrangement to the commissaries whom it concerns. If M. Blanqui is set at liberty, the archbishop of Paris, and also his sister, will be set free, President Bonjean, M. Deguerry, curé of the Madeleine, and M. Lagarde, Vicar-general of Paris. The latter will be the bearer of this letter. The proposal has been agreed to, and now only requires your approval.

"Although I am at stake in this affair, I venture to recommend it to your good will, and my motives will, I hope, appear plausible.

"There are only too many causes of dissension and bitterness amongst us. Since an opportunity occurs of effecting a compromise, which, after all, involves persons rather than principles, might it not be wise to accede to it, and thus to contribute to the soothing of men's minds? Public opinion might not perhaps understand a refusal.

"In a sharp crisis, such as we are now passing through, reprisals, executions by the rioters, though they should touch only two or three persons, add to the terror of some, to the anger of others, and do much to aggravate the situation.

"Permit me to say without further detail, that this question of humanity is worthy of all your attention in the present state of things in Paris.

"May I venture, M. le President, to avow my last reason. Touched by the zeal that the person of whom I speak has testified, with so true a friendship, for M. Blanqui, my heart as a man and as a priest has been unable to resist his moving entreaties, and I have undertaken to ask of you the liberation of M. Blanqui as promptly as possible. This I have now done.

"I should be happy, M. le President, if what I now solicit should not appear to you impossible. I shall then have rendered service to several persons, and even to my country."

M. Thiers did not return a reply for two days. He wished to consult the Ministers, and afterwards the Commission of Fifteen.

The Council and the Commission were unanimously for a refusal. M. Thiers prepared a letter to this effect, which never reached its destination, but of which the conclusion and the motives were made public.

The Archbishop was no doubt right in saying that "reprisals, and executions by the rioters, added to the terror of some, and the anger of others." What would the Ministry not have done to give to the present struggle a less sanguinary character? No one at Versailles believed that the lives of the hostages were threatened. They knew by a cruel and recent experience, of what a riotous mob

is capable, in a moment of excitement. But the hostages were in prison, they could not perish save by virtue of an order from the insurrectional Government, and however criminal that Government might be, it would not go so far as deliberately to order a wanton massacre: but, supposing that they were wicked enough to commit such a crime and insane enough to cut off their own sole chance of safety, only five hostages were proposed as an exchange for M. Blanqui. There still would remain nearly two thousand in the hands of the insurrection; so that the results of an execution or rather of a massacre so justly dreaded by the Archbishop, would not be avoided. The Government had no right to make this exchange; they could only effect it in violation of the law; because Blanqui, condemned, but condemned in default, must of necessity be tried, and could not under the circumstances be a subject for clemency. And then, political reason would forbid the insurrection's being provided with a chief who would be regarded as a considerable addition to its strength.

"Would not the acceptance of this offer be to sanction and extend the abominable system of hostages, and to permit the men ruling in Paris to multiply arrests so as to constrain the Government to effect new exchanges.

"I am thus, Monseigneur, without the right and

without the power of effecting the exchange you propose, and which a commission of the Assembly has unanimously decided that the Government ought to refuse.

"In this distressing position, I am at least confident that the men who have dared to arrest you will not be so wicked as to proceed to any further violence."

This last sentence expressed the belief of every one. When on the 22nd May the soldiers entered La Roquette, which had been deserted by the Federals, the first words of the captain were, "Where is the Archbishop, where is M. Bonjean?" They had been assassinated three days before.

It would be hard to say from whence came the order for their execution. There had been a sham court-martial at the Mairie of the 11th arrondissement, where Delescluze had established himself, and which was the rendezvous of the members of the Commune and the insurgent officers. Who gave the order to assemble this tribunal, and regulated its formation? Was it Raoul Rigault or Ferré? or the Committee of Public Welfare? The President was one Genton, a carpenter, a former club-president at the end of the empire and during the siege, an illiterate personage of whom the Commune had made a magistrate. The names of the assessors are unknown, it is probable that

he himself never knew them; such formalities were needless. "The Court" sat at the Marie of the 11th, on the 14th May, at two o'clock in the afternoon. Although it was composed of three members only, there were present members of the Commune who took part in the proceedings. The first question that arose was the shooting of sixty-six hostages. They were reduced to six, on the stipulation that the Archbishop and M. Bonjean should be of the number.

Vallés and Vermorel strongly opposed the contemplated iniquity, but their voices were overpowered. Genton set out for La Grande Roquette with the sentence; he was accompanied by Mégy and Sicard, and he arrived at about five o'clock. The order only bore two names, and demanded six victims, "We must have the six names," said the clerk of the prison, endeavouring to gain time.

Genton took the jailor's list, and wrote the six names in the following order: Darboy, Bonjean, Deguerry, Allard, Clerc, Ducoudray. "It must be approved," said the clerk. Genton ran to the Mairie of the 11th, and returned in three quarters of an hour with the order endorsed by Ferré. A body of forty men, led by François (the director of the prison), Genton, Mégy, Picard, and Vérig (Vérig was the captain commanding the post),

mounted to the first floor. Let us follow M. Maxime du Camp to the end of the story. "Ramain (a superintendent, a friend of François, and newly brought by him into the prison) called the roll: "Darboy!" a very calm voice replied "Present." "Bonjean," "I am here," said the President, "I am taking my overcoat." Ramain seized him by the arm: "It is not worth while, you will do as you are," said he. They called Deguerry, no voice was heard, the name was repeated, and after some moments, the curé of the Madeleine came and placed himself next to M. Bonjean. The Fathers Clerc, Allard, and Ducoudray replied at once, and joined their companions. Ramain said, "The number is made up." The men then moved away. The chiefs deliberated for an instant as to the spot where the execution should take place. They would be too much in sight in the little garden. Ramain opened the door leading to the first circular path. The Archbishop passed through first, rapidly descended the five steps, and turned round; when his companions in martyrdom were on the steps he raised his right hand, and pronounced the form of absolution, "Ego vos absolvo ab omnibus censuris et peccatis;" then he offered his arm to M. Bonjean, who walked with difficulty.

They were placed against the wall facing the firing-party, Monseigneur Darboy first, then M.

Bonjean, the Abbé Deguerry, Fathers Ducoudray and Clerc, both Jesuits, and lastly the Abbé Allard, almoner to the ambulances, who during the siege and the battles of the Commune had zealously tended the wounded.

The firing-party were within thirty paces from the six men who stood there erect and resigned. It was Genton who gave the order to fire. Two successive volleys were heard, and then a few stray shots. It was a quarter to eight in the evening.

The next day, the 25th, at seven in the morning Genton returned to La Grande Roquette and made them deliver up Jecker, the banker, who was taken on foot through a multitude of streets into some waste ground beyond Père la Chaise, and there shot. M. Lissagaray, in his "Histoire de la Commune," says that he seemed to resign himself very quickly, and even conversed on the way.

"You are mistaken," he said, "if you think that I made a good thing of this; those people tricked me." Genton had but four armed men with him. M. Maxime du Camp names two of them, François and Vérig.

On the same day, Thursday the 25th, another massacre took place at the other end of Paris.

A descent had been made, on the 19th, upon the

École Albert le Grand, directed by Père Captier, and the Dominicans of Arcueil. The latter were accused of corresponding with the hostile army, by means of signals, which they had never dreamed of doing. Their house was entered, the occupants imprisoned, their plate and money seized. There were twenty-one monks, a few servants, a very small number of children whom their parents had been unable to remove, and some Sisters of Charity. The Sisters and the children were sent to Saint Lazare. The Dominicans were shut up in the casemates of the fort of Bicêtre with two Belgian servants, and two children over fifteen. The next day they were taken to the prison of the 13th zone, which was already overcrowded; one of them escaped on the way; the two boys were set at liberty, the two Belgians were let off as foreigners. The other twenty found themselves in this new prison at the mercy of Serizier, a turner transformed into a colonel and Chef de Légion, who at the beginning of the insurrection had helped Leo Meillet to save the life of General Chanzy, but who had become ferocious after six weeks of fighting, absolute authority, and violent excitement. Serizier, who had a horror of priests, overwhelmed these with abuse. He wanted to compel them to work at the barricade; but they stoutly refused. "We are Infirmarians," they

said; "we succour your wounded, but we will not lend our assistance to war." As it was impossible to dishonour, it was resolved to kill them; but to kill them like human game, instead of having recourse to the vulgar proceeding of the firing-party, and of "sticking them to the wall." Serizier placed the National Guards at some distance, as if on the watch for a shot. A good many women with muskets joined them to take part in the fun. When all was ready, an adjutant entered the prison, and said to the Dominicans, "Go out, you are at liberty." He, however, made them go out one by one. Father Captier was the first to appear at the street door. He saw the guns levelled at him. "O God, is it possible?" he cried; and fell upon the first step, pierced with several balls. Those who came afterwards began to run in different directions. Stumbling about, encumbered as they were by their long garments, eight of them managed to gain the cross streets, and to escape. The whole quarter had turned out to see the spectacle; the windows were thronged with men and women who laughed and clapped their hands.

The massacre of the Rue Haxo must now be related. One's heart sickens at such recollections; but if these catastrophes are to be the last, there must be no shrinking from the terrible task of

relating them. Those are lugubrious annals, which begin with the murder of Vincenzini, of Lecomte, and of Clément Thomas.

During Friday the 26th, when no one could longer retain any illusions as to the issue of the struggle, the leaders thought of carrying out a plan which had been conceived by Delescluze; that of collecting all the hostages at the Mairie of Belleville, and demanding their own life and liberty in exchange for them from the Government. There was, besides these, a minority who did not count upon the clemency of the Government, or who, maddened by the strife, preferred revenge to everything. Emile Gois, who was chosen to take the prisoners out of La Roquette, belonged to this class. He and François, who had massacred the hostages on the 24th and Jecker on the 25th, assisted one another. François had his lists ready, when Emile Gois arrived with his escort. They brought down eleven priests and four laymen from the division to which M. Bonjean and the Archbishop had belonged; from that which they called the gendarmes' quarter, were next selected thirty-seven gendarmes or guards of Paris and fifteen serjeants of police. Gois sent back the fifteen serjeants, thinking his escort scarcely sufficient for those who remained. The thirty-seven gendarmes buckled on their knap-

sacks, put on their képis, and descended two and two, keeping step, under the conduct of their quarter-master one Geanty. They took the lead, the laymen followed next, then the priests. Emile Gois mounted his horse, and they started.

Such an escort was absurd for such a number of prisoners, and outside the prison as far as the Rue Puebla the mob was sympathetic; a woman called out to them, "Run away! run away!" They all followed Geanty, however, as though they were going on parade; and whether it was that Geanty despaired of success, or was mistaken as to the intentions of their jailors, or that he yielded mechanically to the habit of discipline, he marched straight on, without the slightest thought of flight or of resistance. In the Rue Puebla the mob showed itself hostile. Stones were thrown, a cry was raised, "Down with the priests." An immense crowd was watching the horrible and magnificent spectacle of the burning of Paris from the heights. The federals, repulsed from the Buttes-Chaumont, came flying at all their speed; and feeling themselves in comparative security, they loudly demanded that the prisoners should be given up to them. They would have massacred them on the instant.

The escort stood firm, and succeeded in ascending the Rue Puebla and the Rue des Rigoles which

is a continuation of it, in the midst of an enormous concourse. G. Ranvier was on the threshold of the Mairie of the 20th. He received the prisoners "in his Mairie." "You have a quarter of an hour to make your wills if that amuses you," he told them. In fact they did set out again in a quarter of an hour. It is stated that Ranvier said, "Go and shoot me *all that*, on the rampart."

The cortége had changed its aspect. At the head marched a vivandière dressed in red, sitting astride upon a horse, a sword in her hand; next came the drummers and trumpets, sounding the charge; next the hostages, surrounded, pressed upon, hardly protected by their escort. Shouts arose of "Here! here! let us go no farther." The most furious of the crowd drove away the soldiers, and struck the prisoners in the face. Thus they were driven up the Rue Haxo, as far as a cité that now bears the number 83; it was the head-quarters of the 2nd zone.

The last members of the Commune and the Central Committee, the last of the federal officers had gathered there that day. They had just divided the contents of the safe amongst them. Eudes, Bergeret, and Jourde had left. Varlin was still there, also Humbert, Latapy, Oudet, and Hippolyte Parent.

A tremendous clamour, drowing the trumpets

and drums, announced the arrival of the hostages. Varlin, who soon afterwards was to follow in the same path, rushed to meet them and to repel the assassins. His friends had to use force to remove him; he was threatened with "being stuck to the wall" like the others.

The hostages were pushed into a little court where there was a building, and a low, unfinished wall, about fifty centimètres in height.

The vivandière jumped off her horse and struck the first blow. Geanty uncovered his breast; a priest threw himself in front of him; they both fell. "With muskets, with revolvers, they fired upon these unfortunate men," says M. Maxime du Camp. "Some federals, attracted by the noise, had perched themselves upon a neighbouring wall, and sang at the top of their voices while firing downwards. Hippolyte Parent, standing on a little wooden balcony, with a cigar in his mouth and his hands in his pockets, looked quietly on until the end.

"Massacre was not enough: the assassins invented a game. They forced the unhappy men to jump the low wall. The gendarmes jumped; they shot them 'flying,' and that was amusing. One of the priests having said, 'We are ready to confess our faith, but it does not become us to die skipping;' a federal threw down his musket,

seized him round the body and, amidst the applause of the crowd, pushed him and then the others over the wall. The last priest resisted; he fell, dragging the federal along with him. The assassins were impatient, fired, and killed their comrade.

"A few still breathed; the crowd fired a general volley at them, thrust at them with bayonets, and stamped on their corpses. When the bodies were removed on the 29th May, it was stated that one of them had received sixty-nine balls."

On the 24th May, twenty-four hours after the commencement of the conflagration, the day after the murder of Chaudey, the very day on which the Archbishop and M. Bonjean were assassinated, the Central Committee, speaking of conciliation after their own fashion, placarded and distributed the following declaration:—

"Republican Federation of the National Guard.

"Central Committee.

"At this supreme moment, when a whole population, arrived at the climax of exasperation, has resolved to conquer or to die for the maintenance of its rights, the Central Committee desires to make its voice heard.

"We have but fought against an enemy: civil war. Consistent throughout, whether as a provisional administration, or, since we have entirely

withdrawn from affairs, we have thought, spoken and acted in this sense.

"To-day, and for the last time, in presence of the evils which may fall upon us all,

"We propose to the heroic armed people who elected us, we propose to the erring men who are attacking us, the only solution capable of arresting bloodshed, while securing the legitimate rights that Paris has won.

"1st. The National Assembly, whose part is played out, shall dissolve itself.

"2nd. The Commune will likewise dissolve itself.

"3rd. The so-called regular army shall leave Paris, and withdraw to a distance of at least twenty-five kilomètres.

"4th. A temporary authority, composed of delegates from the towns, numbering at the least 50,000 inhabitants, shall be appointed.

"This body shall choose from among its members a provisionary government, whose mission will be to elect a constituent Assembly and a Commune of Paris.

"5th. There shall be no reprisals taken, either against the members of the Assembly or against the members of the Commune, for any acts after the 26th March.

"These are the only acceptable conditions.

"May the blood spilt in a fratricidal struggle fall upon the heads of those who oppose them.

"As for us, in the future as in the past, we will do our duty to the end.

"The members of the Central Committee."

But, on the 24th, General de Cissey was master of the Luxembourg, of the Pantheon, of the Barrière d'Enfer; his troops were arriving at the quay of the left bank opposite the Hôtel de Ville, while on the right the army occupied the 12th and 2nd arrondissements. The Hôtel de Ville, then deserted and in readiness for burning, was surrounded by our troops.

It burnt between two corps d'armée. On the 25th General de Cissey took the Butte-aux-Cailles after a serious encounter. General Vinoy advanced as far as the Bastille. The Château d'Eau was in the hands of the besiegers. General Ladmirault occupied La Chapelle and Villette on the very day on which Jecker was assassinated, and when they had the pleasure, at the 13th zone, of a battue of Dominicans.

On the 26th Vinoy took the Faubourg Saint Antoine, and the Lyons Station, which the insurgents fired on leaving. He next occupied the Place du Trône and reached the boundary of Père La Chaise. Ladmirault was in possession of the Rotonde and of the Temple. On the 27th Douay took the rest of the faubourg.

The Commune was dislodged from Père La Chaise. There was no fighting there, as was said, nor did the fugitives attempt an ambuscade among the shrubs or behind the tombs. The army reached the heights by the great thoroughfares, without encountering any obstacles.

Ladmirault was master of the Buttes-Chaumont by Sunday morning.

The insurrection, which had been confined since the 26th to the Faubourg of Belleville and Ménilmontant, signalized its last hours by the massacres of the Rue Haxo, and the burning of the docks of La Villette. Ferré returned on the 27th to the Rue de la Roquette, to bring back 1300 soldiers, prisoners at La Petite Roquette, to Belleville, and 315 hostages, who still remained at La Grande Roquette; these put themselves on the defensive. Ferré, who was pressed for time, and who believed the regiments of the line were at his heels, started with the 1300 soldiers. He had time to take them back to Belleville, and to encamp them in the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, where they passed their last night of captivity. On Sunday morning, the 28th, there was nothing left to take but a few barricades. The last surrendered at four in the afternoon.

The following proclamation, very simple and very dignified, announced to Paris and to France that the horrible struggle was at an end :—

"French Republic.

"Inhabitants of Paris,

"The army of France has come to save you. Paris is delivered. At four o'clock our soldiers took the last positions occupied by the insurgents.

"To-day the struggle is ended; order, labour, and security are about to revive.

"MARÉCHAL DE MACMAHON."

Certain hostages perished by their own fault on the 27th. The prison of La Grande Roquette was free. The greater portion of the prisoners remained there to await the army, but some went out into the neighbouring streets, still bristling with barricades. Monseigneur Surat, Grand-Vicar, M. Bécourt, Curé of Bonne-Nouvelle, M. Houillon, missionary, and a civilian, M. Chaulieu, reached the Rue de Charonne, where they were stopped.

Monseigneur Surat said, "I am a priest, and I have come out of La Roquette." They were massacred on the spot.

The Army has been reproached with not having taken Paris on the 22nd and 23rd. This rapidity would, it is said, have saved the lives of the hostages. The barricades, which had to be taken one by one, did not then exist; they were the work of those two days; 582 barricades having been constructed in the interval between Sunday and Wednesday morning. But

no one can vouch for the accuracy of these figures, which are probably exaggerated. All the barricades, whatever their number, were not raised in two days. From the 18th March, Paris was busy in erecting barricades. Cluseret and Rossel, had shown great energy in directing those operations. The Commune had more cannon than were required in the forts and on the ramparts wherewith to furnish them; the interior of the city bristled with them.

The entry of the troops, on Sunday the 21st, was a surprise, and there was a momentary panic among the insurgents; Passy, Auteuil, Grenelle, were scarcely defended; the army took advantage of this to advance rapidly towards the Trocadero. But the confusion did not last a day. During the night of Sunday to Monday, the tocsin sounded in all the churches, and the drums beat to arms in every street with a deafening noise. The army, at the first step they made to enter the streets, found muskets and cannon pointed at them. It was known that the insurgents held in their power 1500 or 2000 hostages, but it was probable, it was believed, that they would only make use of them to negotiate, and in fact this was the opinion of the great majority of the combatants.

The madmen who preferred their own vengeance to this last chance of safety, would only have begun earlier to assassinate, had they been

attacked with blind impetuosity, at the risk of sacrificing the soldiers; they would either have massacred the prisoners in a body, or set fire to the prisons.

An order to burn Mazas had been given. M. Thiers remained faithful during this last week, to the rule which he had imposed on himself from the beginning; to go slowly, that he might go surely. Those who criticize him too late, do not measure the consequences of a defeat, or even of a check in the moment of victory. The advance movement might be slow without too much peril from a political point of view; the least retrogade movement would have ruined all.

It was necessary to keep in view the spirit of the army and of the large towns; of the excitement of a portion of the Assembly in a contrary sense, and lastly, above all, of the presence of the Prussians.

Certain historians, who have never dealt with politics or commanded armies, are pleased to say that Paris might have been taken in two days, that nothing was easier. In the same manner General Trochu is reproached for not having raised the siege. The Commandant of the Army and his generals thought with M. Thiers and the Government, that the taking of the streets of Paris was a difficult and redoubtable enterprise;

that it required as much ability as courage, and that they ought not to leave behind them either present or future combatants.

They considered the lives of their men; a precipitate and headlong rush through Paris could not succeed except at the cost of innumerable human victims, whilst the losses of the army would be comparatively slight. The war, conducted as it was, does honour to the humanity and ability of our generals. Such will certainly be the final judgment of History.

It is to be regretted that cruelties should have been committed by the conquerors. They may be explained, it is impossible to justify them. The Government had given a formal order that all who laid down their arms should be made prisoners, and this was also the desire of the Marshal and of the principal officers of the army. Nothing is so impossible, however, as to excite the ardour of the soldier, when he is on this side of the wall, and to exact that he shall restrain himself so soon as he is on the other side.

He has slain and he slays. Victory during the first hour, is mere vengeance. Men whose own blood is flowing and who have trodden on the bodies of their comrades, can hardly be merciful. They are sometimes ferocious, and that is deeply deplorable.

The war had been very sanguinary. Fighting had gone on daily for two months. The army had seen the Civil War commence, after the foreign war, with a thrill of indignation. The regiments on returning from captivity and having so much need of rest, and of a welcome from their country, found themselves obliged to go into harness again, to give and receive gun-shots and cannon-shots, while they were being waited for and expected at their homes.

The burning of Paris was not calculated to soften the conquerors' hearts. The flames that enveloped them showed these brave men human madness and fury under a new form. They forgot they were in France, on beholding these barbarities.

Among the few leaders of the insurrection who perished in action, we may quote Duval, Flourens, a colonel named Burgoin, General Dombrowski, Delescluze, who fell at a barricade where he came to die, and not to fight, on the 25th May: Vermorel, who received a mortal wound on the last day; Millière, who was shot on the steps of the Pantheon. Rigault had been arrested on the 24th, in a house where he tried to hide. As they took him away, "I am Raoul Rigault," he said, and he was shot dead on the spot.

Many members of the Commune, and officers,

succeeded in making their escape. The Government only laid hands on twenty-seven members of the Commune, forty-five members of the Central Committee, two generals, forty-six colonels and lieutenant-colonels, eleven commissariat officers, and fifty-seven doctors. The other prisoners, of whom the number exceeded 30,000, were but the mob.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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